

# An Interview with Gregg Hurwitz

May, 2010 Featured Author

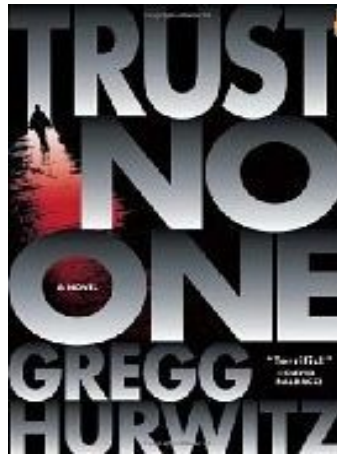
at

Time with Tannia

( <http://timewithtannia.tripod.com> )

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés



## 1. Tells about yourself.

I've been writing as long as I can remember, starting with crayon-illustrated mysteries in third grade. I've written nine thrillers, most recently **TRUST NO ONE**. I've also written feature screenplays, TV pilots, and comics for Marvel, including Wolverine, the Punisher, and Moon Knight. I recently started a gig as a consulting producer on the TV show V. The bottom line: I love writing and I've been lucky as hell to get to do what I love.

Anything else you'd like to know, you can find at [www.gregghurwitz.net](http://www.gregghurwitz.net) or under my bio at <http://gregghurwitz.net/bio/>

## 2. You wrote your first novel while attending the university and pursuing a degree in Shakespearean tragedy. What was its theme? How satisfied were you with the final manuscript?

I focused on Jungian analysis of the tragedies, focusing in particular on Othello. Which - if you think about it - is a great damn thriller. Lust, intrigue, murder - it's got it all. My first book, *The Tower*, reads very young to me now, but it's got a bit of a cult following, so it must not be as bad as it seems to me in hindsight. I'm certainly glad my writing's improved - I started that book when I was 19!

**3. Based on your experience, how can a fan legally write an episode of his/her favorite comic hero while avoid falling into the trap of writing fan literature?**

I'm not sure if you can. I always encourage writers to create their own characters. Then there are no legal complications. However on my case, I got pretty lucky with Marvel. The editor-in-chief had read my Tim Rackley series, was a fan, and called to offer me a character picked from the Marvel vaults to have my own limited series. If writers are interested in writing for comics, I'd suggest writing a spec of a well-known character - Spiderman or Batman - which they can then submit to any house, be it Marvel, DC, or a smaller, fine house like Top Cow or IDW. A number of writers who I know started out self-publishing and crossed over - that seems to have a higher success rate in comics than in novels. But the fundamentals are the same - focus first and intensely on the writing before you worry about the selling. The business end of things should come later, after you've written, and rewritten, and rewritten, and rewritten. It's such a competitive market that you want to go to buyers with the strongest material you're capable of producing.

**4. You are a diverse and accomplished author. You have written articles, comics, novels, short stories, and screenplays. Which one of these genre better reflect your creativity and allow the voices in your head more freedom to express themselves?**

I love them all - I wouldn't embark on a story unless it was something I knew I could really dig in to. And I have to know it'll be a challenge, and that I'll have fun. The novels are the most consuming just based on the sheer amount of time they require, but each form has its pleasures and difficulties.

**5. For the benefits of new thriller writers, what do you considered the main elements of an award winning, page turner, and cliffhanger story?**

Fresh characters, a great conflict - often ethical - for the main characters. And a flawed protagonist.

**6. Rejection letters and negative criticism are the two main turn off issues for wannabeauthors. How do you handle them?What have you learned from these experiences?**

You can't enter this field unless you have thick skin. There will be tons of rejection letters and criticism - even if you are blessed with an easy road. You need to take them in stride, listen to those who are smart, and above all else, focus on your craft. The loudest voices in your head should always be those of your characters.

**7. Your novels have been translated into sixteen languages and nominated for numerous prestigious awards. How do you keep a healthy balance between your public and private lives?**

For me, the key is transitioning well from work - which is intense and often consuming - to family time. I tend to do that with something physical - a hike or the gym - to get me out of my head and into my body. And I try to be where I am at the moment, though sometimes it's hard to be present anywhere when I'm really engaged in a story.

**8. How far have you pushed yourself while researching your thrillers? Would you please share with us your most exciting and/or challenging adventure?**

Pretty far. I've learned to ride Harleys, gone up in stunt planes, sneaked onto demolitions ranges with Navy SEALs, and done countless other fun and stupid things. For The Program, I went undercover into a mind-control cult so I could most effectively write about one from the inside, and

that was a blast.

**9. Now let us talk about your novel, *Trust No One*. I was very impressed by the elegance, selective vocabulary, and, at the same time, easy to follow storyline. Your book read to me as a movie script. Was the flow of the story influenced by your screenplay writing experience? Have this or any of your other novels ever be considered for a Hollywood movie?**

Thank you - I'm so glad you enjoyed it. While I have adapted my own work - *The Kill Clause*, for Paramount - I can never think about a script while I'm writing the book. They are different animals and they function differently. So I can't write a great book if all I'm thinking about is a screenplay underlying it. That said, working in Hollywood has helped me lean out some of writing.

With a script, of course, all information must be conveyed visually or in dialogue. There is no room for anything that doesn't propel the plot, so scripts must function more mercilessly when it comes to plot. Novels can take more time with character, and of course, one can "think" inside a character's head (without having to resort to voice over). So in that way, to construct a novel that fulfills the obligations of that form is quite different than setting out to write a screenplay.

**10. While reading, *Trust No One*, I noticed a big resemblance between the character of senator Jasper Caruther and former president Bill Clinton. Was he the source of inspiration? Or is it just pure coincidence?**

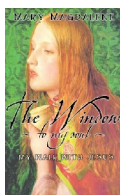
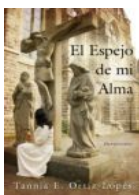
Ha! I hadn't thought of that.

**11. The main character, Nick Horrigan, is thrown into a web of betrayal, national security secrets, and loyalty trials. He starts his ordeal thinking as Dr. Watson and ends up slipping into the mind of the clever Sherlock Holmes. Do you agree with this analogy?**

My favorite thing about sending a book out into the world is that readers bring all sorts of insight to the story that I wouldn't have thought of on my own. Your frame of reference is an interesting one, in that Nick starts out more passive and becomes ever more active in unraveling the intrigue.

**12. A word of advice to new thriller authors.**

Write, write, write. The more rear-end-in-chair time, the better!



**Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés**, author of *The Window To My Soul*; *My Walk With Jesus* (2004 Tate Publishing:); *El Espejo de mi Alma* (2010 Pleasant Word) .

Author's websites: [timewithtannia.tripod.com](http://timewithtannia.tripod.com)., [www.shoutlife.com/tanniaortizlopes](http://www.shoutlife.com/tanniaortizlopes), and [www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes](http://www.myspace.com/tanniaortizlopes) The author also has a blog at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)

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## READERS' COMMENTS:

**Date Received:** May 3, 2010 9:37:28 AM EST

**Name:** Lori Ann Watson

**Email Address:(optional)**

**Web site URL:(optional)**

**Where did you hear about this interview?** Email from Tannia

**Comments:** Fun interview to read! :-)

**Date Received:** May 3, 2010 3:21:33 PM EST

**Name:** Denise Turney

**Email Address:(optional)**

**Web site URL:(optional)** [www.chistell.com](http://www.chistell.com)

**Where did you hear about this interview?** Tannia

**Comments:** Great interview, Tannia! Enjoyed it! Always good to see folks walking in success!  
Denise Turney Author - Long Walk Up

**Date Received:** May 4, 2010 8:43:05 AM ES

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**Web site URL:(optional)** <http://www.cafes.net/debstr/buttonsampler.htm>

**Where did you hear about this interview?** Tannia

**Comments:** Very interesting interview, Tannia. I look forward to more of your Feature Authors ! I'll be looking for books by Greg here in Tennessee, USA. Blessings to you and yours  
Deb

**Date Received:** May 10, 2010 3:29:43 AM EST

**Name:** Shawn Grady

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**Web site URL:(optional)** [www.shawngradybooks.com](http://www.shawngradybooks.com)

**Where did you hear about this interview?**

**Comments:** Great feature Tannia!