MYSTERIES TO DIE FOR

SEASON 9: STUFF THAT CAN KILL YOU

Call for Stories

<u>Introduction</u>

Mysteries to Die For (M2D4) is a story telling podcast with a companion anthology that structures mysteries to give the audience a chance to beat the detective to the solution. Reminiscent of the Ellery Queen radio show, whodunnit style mysteries are told up to the critical point, at which the hosts and audience enter into a deliberation to find the culprit. Then comes the big reveal. Each M2D4 season has a theme.

- Season 1 was TG Wolff's WIDOW'S RUN, told as one chapter each episode.
- Season 2: The Originators featured adaptations of stories from the 1800's predated Mystery being a genre including The Murders in the Rue Morgue.
- Season 3: Enter the Detective introduced adaptations of the first cases of serial detectives including Holmes and Poirot.
- Season 4: A Word Before Dying contained original stories around the theme of the murder victim's last spoken word.
- Season 5: Move It or Lose It featured the vehicles that propel mysteries forward.
- Season 6: Things that Go Jack in the Night was a salute to my co-creator Jack and of the many, many plays on the work Jack. Pepperjack cheese, jackass, lumberjack, jack be nimble, jack-in-the-box, jackalopes…the list just keeps going!
- Season 7: Games People Play explored the not so innocent side of diversions ranging from the ancient game of marbles to the modern Dungeons & Dragons.
- Season 8: Anything but Murder dug into the myriad of ways to create mayhem up to but *not* including murder.

Season 9 is all about the means of murder. STCKY—Stuff That Can Kill You—is an approach to categorizing and recognizing hazards in dangerous environments such as construction, manufacturing, and electrical systems. This season, we get STCKY over weapons. Gravity. Motion. Mechanical. Electrical. Pressure. Sound. Radiation. Biological. Chemical. Temperature. No guns or knives allowed.

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Project Overview

M2D4 is soliciting 23 original stories for Season 9 podcast and anthologies. The podcast stories will drop bi-weekly January – December 2026. All stories will be performed by TG and Jack Wolff. Prior to recording, the story will be edited for podcastability (focus on listener experience). Stories will be copyedited (focus on grammar) and published as an anthologies released in Spring and Fall.

Story Requirements

Complete, drafted stories must be submitted in the provided format and meet the following requirements:

➢ Story length: 4,000-8,000 words
➢ Story style: whodunnit mystery using your chosen STCKY weapon
➢ Story structure: chapter style, with each chapter having a title and the "big reveal" in the last chapter. While this is not traditional for short stories, it is our format for podcast and print

Stories that are not in the required format will be returned. Stories that are not whodunnits or fail to meet the structure requirements will be rejected.

Author Options

Authors have full artistic reign in the following areas:

➢ Subgenre. While the story must be a mystery, it can be any subgenre. Procedurals, PI, cozies, sci-fi, romance, steam punk, paranormal, horror, whatever. It's all good.
➢ Setting. Here, there, anywhere. No limits. The more interesting the better.
➢ Time period. Past, present, future. No limits. Again, the more diverse, the better.
➢ Language. There is no restriction on language with podcasting. Explicit is fucking ok. Note: provide a phonetic key for non-standard words, especially if you use French. TG butchers French. Ça va?
➢ Use of characters from your other stories. As long as you own the rights, we're good. Play in your world.
➢ A note on storytelling for single-voice podcasts: it is critical that listeners know at all times which character is speaking. The visual cue of a new paragraph that indicates speaker changes in print is not available to the listener. Consequently, authors are challenged to use a mix of said tags, speaker emotions, speaker body movement, calling other characters by name, and other tools to indicate a change in speaker for listeners...in a way that is also engaging for readers. This is truly a writer's challenge. And a necessity.

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<u>Submittal Requirements</u>

Submittals of the full drafts are due by ~~October 1, 2025~~ **October 31, 2025** to Tina@tgwolff.com. Subject line: M2D4 S9 YOUR TITLE. In the body of the email, provide the following:

- Title of the story
- Your legal name and pen name, if applicable
- Selected STCKY means of murder
- Synopsis of the story
- Who did it and why
- Was AI used in the development of the story

Authors are encouraged to reach out with synopses, early drafts, or questions. Submittal prior to the deadline is appreciated 😊. Notification of acceptance will be delivered on or before **~~November 1, 2025~~ November 30, 2025.**

Authors new to Mysteries to Die For are encouraged to listen to an episode. Note the "Deliberation" section, which is present in both the podcast and anthology, summarizing the suspects and the clues.

<u>Previously Published Stories</u>

M2D4 is open to previously published stories. However, you must own the rights to the story and be adapted to our format, specifically subdividing into chapters and the sharing of clues prior to the deliberation. The previously published stories are expected to comply with the above requirements.

<u>Artificial Intelligence</u>

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is for creating content is highly discouraged. Authors are required to disclose the use of AI for creating the story content. Contracts will include documentation of the self-disclosed use of AI. Stories using AI may be excluded from printing in the anthologies. The decision to exclude from the anthology is at the sole discretion of TG Wolff and Jack Wolff.

<u>Story Editing and Finalization</u>

The order of the stories is at the sole discretion of TG and Jack Wolff. Content edits will be provided to authors in the order they are scheduled. Authors should expect two rounds with an emphasis on:

- Use of selected STCKY weapon
- Sufficient suspects (3-5 suspects recommended)
- Presentation of clues prior to Deliberation
- Logic murder and the resolution

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Fair Warning: Faulty logic is our pet peeve. TG will pick, whine, and bitch about it. Jack has been known to rant about it on the podcast. Writer be warned, lock your logic down.

Two anthologies will be published corresponding to the first half of the podcast season (episodes 1-12) and the second half (episodes 13-25). One round of copy edits will be provided during the anthology development. The story order of the podcast and anthology will be the same.

To finalize the episode, authors are expected to provide

- Author bio (less than 100 words)
- Pre-roll advertisement (less than 80 words)
- Author website URL
- Social media handles for Facebook and Instagram

<u>Payment, Ownership & Rights</u>

If accepted, the author will receive $25 (US), e-book copy (.pub and .pdf) and one (1) print copy of the anthology in exchange for the exclusive rights to use the story until December 31, 2027. This is 1-year from end of Season 9 podcast. After that date, our rights to the story become non-exclusive and the author may seek publication elsewhere.

The author will be exclusively featured on one episode of Mysteries to Die For, which will include:

- Distribution of the episode to domestic and international markets via Apple Podcast, Spotify, YouTube, and other podcast platforms
- A 80 word pre-roll advertisement to promote your backlist, your next release, etc.
- Direction of the audience to the author social media and/or websites.
- Episode promotion via Facebook, Instagram, YouTube
- Episode posting on m2d4podcast.com
- Author picture, bio, link to your website, and your episode on our author page

Jack Wolff will create a musical bassline based on the story and provided content. Jack Wolff and Mysteries to Die For retain sole rights to the music, with expiration per standard music industry standards. The author has no rights to the music.

The author will be named as the author of the story inside the anthology. The author's bio and website URL will be included in the book.

The author agrees to promote their M2D4 episode on their website and social media outlets. The author similarly agrees to promote the anthology on their websites and social media outlets on the release date.

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We know you, the author, to be a professional and expect you to act like it. If you can't make a deadline, tell us. If you need to make changes, reach out to us. Expect that we will extend the same courtesy to you. We will provide timely feedback. We will set up a schedule and stick to it. If shit happens, we will adapt. Together. No matter how STCKY the situation.