



Midwest Crime Writer

Marguerite Ashton

Crime Fiction With Color

During my two-year attempt at acting, I had the pleasure of meeting actor Dan Lauria. He was a guest speaker at an actor's workshop held by my agent at the time in Colorado.

If you are not familiar with him, he was the dad on the family show *The Wonder Years*, and I loved him in it. A while back, I got to see him in a 1988 movie called *David*. He played the role of a disturbed father which was a huge difference compared to his role as the grumpy and caring dad on the show. After the movie was over, I realized how frustrated I'd become watching him play this character. It had distorted my view of the guy I looked forward to seeing each week.

Once I'd gotten over that the movie was based on a true story, I told myself that Dan Lauria was doing his job as an actor. He'd honed his craft. That was one of the moments that helped me decide that acting wasn't for me. I wanted to be behind the camera and write. The similarities in each artist's performance, whether it is on screen or paper, are meant to touch an audience. But to make any of it real, I had to do what Dan did—make my writing a priority.

Fast forward to today. As I look back and reflect, it has been a long, long road. Going to conferences and treating my writing like a business on an author budget was tough. Except my desire to be a writer was stronger than my addiction to avocados. With all of the ups and downs, the easiest thing for me would have been to give quit. But that's the one thing I refused to do. When my books weren't selling, I kept writing. When the rejection letters poured in, I kept writing. When I reached the point of exhaustion, I took a nap and started a new chapter.

I'll never forget what my writing mentor told me. She said, "Keep your head low and just write." And that's what I'm doing.