

## Pete Earley Press

Short Bio used for introductions:

In a Washingtonian Magazine cover story entitled, Top Journalists: Washington's Media Elite, Pete Earley was described as one of a handful of journalists in America who "have the power to introduce new ideas and give them currency." A former reporter for The Washington Post, he is the author of ten nonfiction books and three novels. His first book, Family of Spies: Inside the John Walker Spy Ring, was a New York Times bestseller and was made into a five hour miniseries shown on CBS television. For his book, The Hot House: Life Inside Leavenworth Prison, Earley spent a full year as a reporter inside a maximum security prison. His book, Circumstantial Evidence helped lead to the release of a black man from death row after he had been wrongly convicted of murdering a white teenager in Alabama. His most recent book, CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness, tells two stories. It describes his attempts to help his college age son, Mike, after he becomes ill with bipolar disorder and is arrested. It also describes a year that Earley spent at the Miami Dade County Jail where he followed persons with mental disorders, who had been in jail, out into the community to see what sort of services they received. His book was one of two finalists for the Pulitzer Prize this year and has won awards from the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Mental Health America and the Washington Psychiatric Association.

### BIOGRAPHY: PETE EARLEY

Pete Earley was cited by Washingtonian Magazine in a cover story entitled, Top Journalists: Washington's Media Elite, as one of a handful of journalists in America who "have the power to introduce new ideas and give them currency." He is the author of eight non-fiction books, including two national best-sellers, and three novels. He is a former reporter for The Washington Post. His books have sold more than one million copies worldwide.

His newest book, CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness, was one of two finalists for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize.

His nonfiction books include:

Family of Spies: Inside the John Walker Spy Ring (1988)  
(A New York Times Bestseller)

Prophet of Death: The Mormon Blood Atonement Killings (1991)

The Hot House: Life Inside Leavenworth Prison (1992)

Circumstantial Evidence: Death, Life, and Justice in a Southern Town (1995)  
(Winner: Edgar Award, 1995, Best True Crime, Robert F. Kennedy Award)

Confessions of A Spy: The Real Story of Aldrich Ames (1997)

Super Casino: Inside the "New" Las Vegas (2000)

WITSEC: Inside the Federal Witness Security Program (2002)

CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness (2006)

His novels include:

The Big Secret (2004)

Lethal Secrets (2005)

The Apocalypse Stone (2006)

Nonfiction:

\* Family of Spies is considered the definitive book about the John Walker Jr. spy ring, the most damaging spy ring in our country's history. Mr. Earley is the only journalist to have spoken to all of the spy ring's members. His book was made into a five hour mini-series, entitled Family of Spies, shown during sweeps month on CBS television. It starred Powers Boothe and Leslie Ann Warren and was nominated for an Emmy. His book also was nominated as the best True Crime Book of 1988 by the Mystery Writers of America. It ranked number nine on the New York Times paperback bestseller list on February 25, 1990. It was excerpted by The Washington Post Magazine and reprinted by Readers Digest Condensed Books.

\* Prophet of Death describes the murders of a family by Jeffrey Don Lundgren and his religious cult, an off-shoot of the Mormon Church. The New York Times wrote this about Prophet of Death: "Mr. Earley's artful narrative casts the seductive spell of a scary story told at granny's knee."

\*The Hot House describes everyday events inside the U.S. Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas. Mr. Earley was the first and only reporter ever given unlimited access by the government to a major maximum security prison. He spent one year conducting research behind its walls. The Hot House was a regional best-seller in hardback in Denver and Chicago, and was a number five bestseller in the New York Post. It's currently used as a supplemental text by many colleges and has been praised by penologists as one of the finest books ever written about prison life.

\*Circumstantial Evidence describes a still-unsolved murder in Monroeville, the small Alabama town that inspired Harper Lee's classic novel, To Kill A Mockingbird. Thanks, in part, to Mr. Earley's investigation, a black man wrongly convicted of murdering a white teenage girl was released from death row after spending six years there. His book won the Robert. F. Kenney Memorial Book Award for Social Justice and was chosen by the Mystery Writers of America as Best True Crime Book of 1995.

\* Confessions of A Spy: The Real Story of Aldrich Ames is based on exclusive interviews that Mr. Earley conducted in jail with Aldrich Ames without the U.S. government's knowledge or permission. He remains the only journalist who has spoken to Ames without a CIA or FBI censor being present. In Moscow, he obtained the first interviews ever granted by Ames' KGB handlers. US News and World Report published an excerpt of his book as its cover story on February 17, 1997, and Nightline dedicated two nights of its program to the revelations in his book.

\*Super Casino: Inside the "New" Las Vegas describes events Mr. Earley observed during a one year period inside a billion dollar Strip casino. The book describes early Las Vegas and the events that led to it becoming the fastest growing city in America.

\*WITSEC: Inside the Federal Witness Security Program describes how the government protects and provides new identities to criminals, including terrorists, after they agree to testify for

federal prosecutors. This book was co-authored by Mr. Earley and Gerald Shur, the former Justice Department attorney who created the program and oversaw it for thirty years.

\*CRAZY: A Father's Search Through America's Mental Health Madness tells two stories. The first account describes Mr. Earley's attempts to get his college age son, Michael, help after he is diagnosed with bipolar disorder and suffers a manic attack that results in him being arrested. The book then shifts to the dreaded ninth floor of the Miami Dade Jail where Mr. Earley follows several psychotic inmates through the justice system and into the streets to document how they are treated. CRAZY was a finalist for the 2007 Pulitzer Prize and has won national awards from NAMI and Mental Health America.

Fiction:

The New York Sun described Mr. Earley's fiction as " a cut above the popular thrillers of John Grisham and Tom Clancy" in a review of *The Big Secret*.

Before writing books full-time, Mr. Earley worked at The Washington Post for seven years. He was hired there initially by Bob Woodward of Watergate fame, but soon moved from the paper's Metro staff to its National staff where he covered a variety of federal agencies. His last assignment was at the Post's Sunday magazine where his stories won a variety of awards.

Mr. Earley first came to Washington D.C. in 1978 as the lone correspondent for The Tulsa Tribune. He covered the Oklahoma congressional delegation and, on occasion, The White House and U.S. Supreme Court. Prior to that, he worked for two years in Tulsa where he was repeatedly honored for his feature writing and investigative reporting. A series of stories that he wrote led to the release of two men from prison who had been wrongly convicted. Another series exposed shoddy treatment of the mentally ill in state institutions.

Mr. Earley graduated with honors in 1973 from Phillips University in Enid, Oklahoma. After graduation, he worked as a reporter at William Allen White's Emporia Gazette in Kansas.

He is married to Patti Luzi Earley and together they have seven children. He serves on several national advisory boards to mental health groups and has taught in the graduate mentor program at Goucher College for narrative nonfiction.

Mr. Earley's trademark is that he allows the subjects of his books to tell their own stories without editorial comment. This is how his work was described in a page-one review of *The Hot House* published by The Los Angeles Times:

"Before we had schools of journalism, there was a straightforward task called reporting that took you where you had not been, and told you what you had not known. This book is by a reporter, and gives the readers reporting at its very finest..."

Please visit [www.PeteEarley.com](http://www.PeteEarley.com) to learn more.



Pete Earley standing in front of two paintings by his son, Mike. The one of the faceless chess player is a self portrait.



Author Pete Earley

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