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**Book Release - Media Kit - Hardcover and Kindle**

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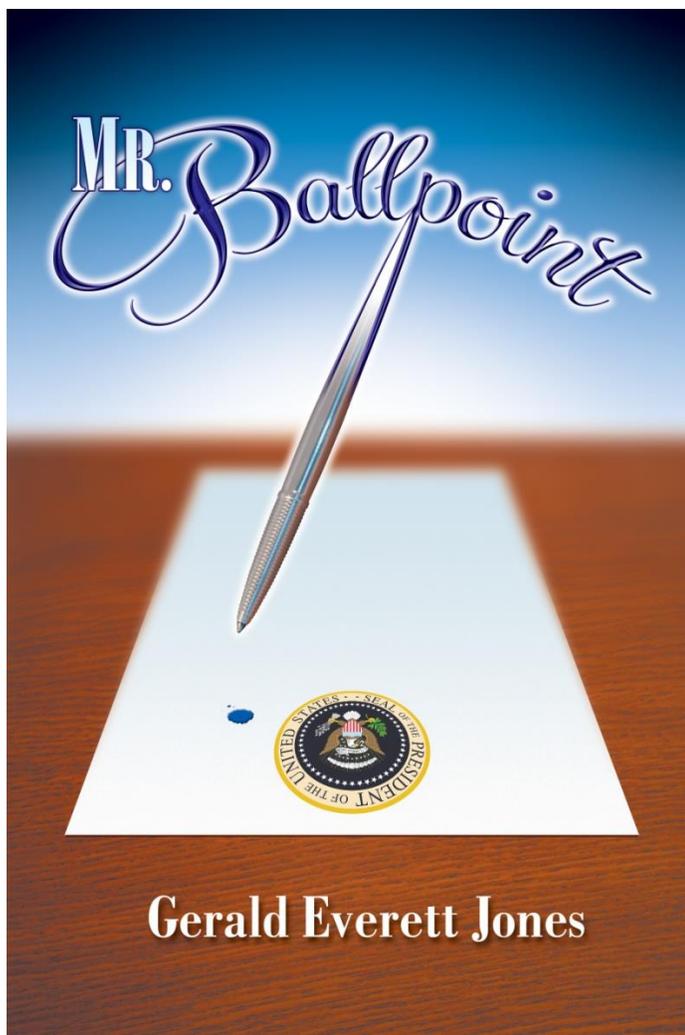
## ***Mr. Ballpoint***

***Humorous Fiction Based on the True Story***

**by Gerald Everett Jones**

Release Date: September 6, 2014

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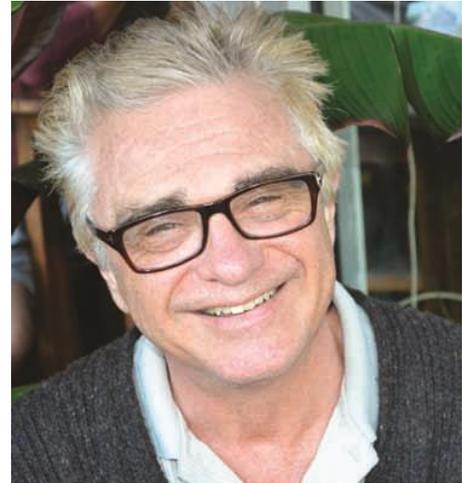
## Intro

**Mr. Ballpoint** is Los Angeles-based author **Gerald Everett Jones's** eighth book for LaPuerta. The first was the tongue-in-cheek business title *How to Lie with Charts*. Gerald expounds on his notions of male-centered humor in his collection of short stories, *Boychik Lit*, which includes an essay on the genre. His



Rollo Hemphill Misadventures series of novels carries through on the comic theme: *My Inflatable Friend*, *Rubber Babes*, and the recently released *Farnsworth's Revenge*. His father-son relationship comedy *Mr. Ballpoint*, written for general audiences, tells how an outrageous huckster brought on the "Pen Wars"

of 1945. Gerald holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honors from the College of Letters, Wesleyan University, where he studied under novelists Peter Boynton (*Stone Island*), F.D. Reeve (*The Red Machines*), and Jerzy Kozinski (*The Painted Bird, Being There*).



He blogs about humorous fiction at **Boychik Lit** [www.boychiklit.com](http://www.boychiklit.com).

## Sample Interview Question – Topic #1 – How did we get the ballpoint pen?

- Flamboyant huckster Milton Reynolds said he "stole it fair and square." Hungarian inventor Laszlo Biro had a prior patent claim and licensed it to Eversharp, but Reynolds developed a cheap workaround design and beat his competitors to market – making a fortune during the first Christmas shopping season following WWII.
- Eversharp soon jumped in, and there began an era famously described in the press at the time as the "Pen Wars," involving wacky publicity stunts, heated lawsuits, outlandish retail promotions, and radio jokes and jingles.
- Partially because of its workaround design, the Reynolds Pen leaked badly. When Milton Reynolds offered to have damaged garments dry-cleaned, his offices were buried under an avalanche of stained clothes. Still, he continued with his advertising claim that his pen "writes under water," which it did, to no apparently useful purpose.
- One of his more outrageous publicity stunts invoked the wrath of the President. He gave out hundreds of pens to Congressmen inscribed, "I Swiped This Pen from Harry S. Truman." The Man from Missouri was not amused when the leaky ballpoints came back to him. He quipped as he re-gifted them to Reynolds, "I guess people think I know how to get 'em fixed."
- Milton Reynolds eventually sold out of the pen business and pursued both record-setting and dubious exploits in aviation and international finance.

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## Sample Interview Question – Topic #2 –Why aren't there more comedies about fathers and sons?

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- It seems that father-son relationship stories are not nearly as prevalent as mother-daughter. And that's the case whether it's a drama or a comedy.
- Female-centered stories, such as the chick-lit genre, focus primarily on relationships. Career is secondary. In male-centered stories, including crime and adventure novels, career or mission is paramount, and relationships either take lower priority or are set aside entirely for the duration of the main character's essential task. Mother-daughter stories are often comedies, or set within romantic comedies about male-female relationships.
- Fathers and sons typically aren't good at expressing emotion to each other. In our gender-role stereotypes, the father figure is stern and authoritarian, and the son's personality is either a reflection of or a rebellion against the father's character.
- Father-son stories tend to be dramas. In the classic story, the father and son have grown apart and barely speak to one another. Early in the story, the father is diagnosed with some terminal disease, and the son spends the rest of the book trying to achieve reconciliation.
- The *Mr. Ballpoint* father-son story is unusual because it's a comedy. The "engine of comedy" is the inherent conflict between two male personality types – a back-slapping salesman and a meticulous engineer – Milton, the huckster, and his mild-mannered son Jim, the Stanford honors graduate. Milton's outrageous marketing schemes are contrived not only to promote the pen but also to teach Jim the basics of win-at-any-cost salesmanship.
- Milton Reynolds commissioned a popular song, "I've Got a Rocket in My Pocket" to publicize a new pen model. In the *Mr. Ballpoint* story, Jim thinks that song sums up male exuberance as fathers and sons "do the crazy dance."

## Author Bio

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Gerald Everett Jones is a freelance writer and sometime technologist who lives in Santa Monica, California. He is a member of the Writers Guild of America, the Dramatists Guild, and Film Independent (FIND), as well as a past director of the Independent Writers of Southern California (IWOSC). Jones is the author of the Rollo Hemphill Misadventures series of comic novels, including the recently released *Farnsworth's Revenge*, a political satire which reviewers have compared to *Confederacy of Dunces*.

As to his philosophy of life, he tells this story:

*When I was in high school, my chemistry teacher approached me and asked with a sly grin, 'You interested in mining?' I told him absolutely not. I was going to be a writer. Little did I suspect that he wanted to send me to a student conference on metallurgy where I could seek the fellowship of like-minded teens on a minimally supervised road-trip to the Big City. Undeterred by my abrupt negative response, he grumbled, 'Well, you're interested in mining your own business, aren't you?'*

*And he sent me anyway. Now I realize I should've listened more carefully to everything he said.*

## Books by Gerald Everett Jones from LaPuerta Books

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[How to Lie with Charts](#) – nonfiction business

[My Inflatable Friend](#) (Rollo Hemphill #1)

[Rubber Babes](#) (Rollo Hemphill #2)

[Farnsworth's Revenge](#) (Rollo Hemphill #3)

[Boychik Lit](#) – short stories and title essay

[The Death of Hypatia and the End of Fate](#) – nonfiction ancient history

[Mr. Ballpoint](#) – general fiction

## Gerald's Past Media Appearances (selected list)

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Mark Isler Show – KRLA 870 AM Los Angeles – **Recurring Guest** – Political panel discussion (1hr): <http://media.am870theanswer.com/Podcasts/2682/Mark%20Isler%20Show%2005-03-14%20Hour%20-%20-%20podcast.mp3>  
Kitty Felde “Talk of the City” KPCC – in-studio featured guest  
Digital Village – KPCC – in-studio featured guest  
Leo LaPorte – Call for Help – TechTV – in-studio featured guest  
The Writing Show with Paula B – featured guest interview (remote)  
G2 “Attack of the Show” – TV in-studio featured guest  
John Seeley – Get Unstuck! – in-studio featured guest  
Michael Dresser Show – featured guest interview (remote, two bookings)

## Contact

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**Media Kit and downloads (book covers, headshots, audio clips):** <http://www.lapuerta.tv/press>

## Websites

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Mr. Ballpoint Goodreads page <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/21948725>  
Mr. Ballpoint Barnes & Noble page <http://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/mr-ballpoint-gerald-everett-jones/1119286250>  
La Puerta Productions / LaPuerta Books <http://www.lapuerta.tv>  
Gerald's Boychik Lit Fan Blog <http://www.boychiklit.com>  
Gerald Everett Jones – Author Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/boychiklit>  
Gerald's Goodreads profile [https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/28851.Gerald\\_Everett\\_Jones](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/28851.Gerald_Everett_Jones)  
Farnsworth's Revenge Amazon page <http://www.amazon.com/Farnsworths-Revenge-Rollo-Hemphill-Misadventure/dp/0985622725>  
Farnsworth's Revenge Goodreads page <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/18812292-farnsworth-s-revenge>

## Audio Clips – Readings by the Author

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*Mr. Ballpoint* – Author reads Chapter 1 – Jim waits outside the Oval Office for his audience with President Truman. <https://soundcloud.com/daboychik/mr-ballpoint-chapter-1>  
*Farnsworth's Revenge* – Excerpt from Chapter 5 “Spin Cycle” Rollo muses on who would benefit by kidnapping Hugo Farnsworth's life-sized sex toy. <https://soundcloud.com/daboychik/gerald-everett-jones-reads-1>  
*Farnsworth's Revenge* – Chapter 9 “Getting Warmer” The eccentric Turk takes Rollo into the basement of his mansion to see his mysterious electrical power generation station. <https://soundcloud.com/daboychik/gerald-everett-jones-reads>

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## Tip Sheet

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- **Humorous fiction** inspired by the true story of consumer mania for the first ballpoint pen.
- **Intended audience** General – recommended for ages 14 and up. No strong language. Some sexual situations, none graphic.
- Excellent first-person description of a bygone era. It's a lighthearted story of postwar WWII America, especially the early days of nationwide retail marketing and the consumer-driven economy.
- In 1945, **Milton Reynolds** introduced the ballpoint to the United States and triggered the biggest single-day shopping riot in history at Gimbels in Manhattan. The **Reynolds International Pen Company** made \$5 million in eight weeks during the first non-wartime Christmas season. Thereafter, increasing competition from established companies such as **Eversharp** triggered several years of the "Pen Wars."
- **An flamboyant entrepreneur** who had already made and lost several fortunes, Reynolds bragged that he "stole it fair and square." This novel is told from his mild-mannered son Jim's point of view, about coping with Milton's outrageous schemes, then their sudden success.
- As Milton Reynolds was selling out of the pen business, he bought a war-surplus bomber, retrofitted it with new twin engines, and hired **air ace Bill Odom** to fly him around the world, breaking the previous speed record set by **Howard Hughes**. Reynolds then conducted an air expedition over the K2 mountain range in Tibet. His hope was to prove the peak was higher than Mt. Everest and have it renamed Mt. Reynolds.
- Facts cited about the ballpoint pen, its development, and marketing are mostly true. The author provides an extensive list of references in the back matter. Some characters and most of the dialogue are fictional.
- This is author **Gerald Everett Jones**'s eighth book for LaPuerta. His first was the tongue-in-cheek business title **How to Lie with Charts**. He is also the author of the "boychik-lit" series of Rollo Hemphill Misadventures, including **My Inflatable Friend**, **Rubber Babes**, and **Farnsworth's Revenge**. He holds a Bachelor of Arts with Honors from the College of Letters, Wesleyan University, where he studied under novelists Peter Boynton (Stone Island), F.D. Reeve (The Red Machines), and Jerzy Kozinski (The Painted Bird, Being There). He blogs about male-centered comic fiction at [www.boychiklit.com](http://www.boychiklit.com).

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## Book Fact Sheet

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## Short Synopsis

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In 1945, Milton Reynolds introduced the ballpoint pen to the United States and triggered the biggest single-day shopping riot in history. Reynolds, an exuberant huckster who had already made and lost several fortunes, again became an overnight millionaire and then bragged that he “stole it fair and square.”

Milton was a man ideally suited to his time – the post-war boom when the salesman was king and all of the rules had yet to be written. He was an old-fashioned silver-tongued American peddler who would do almost anything – ethical or otherwise – to close a deal. His son Jim was a quiet Boy Scout who couldn't tell a lie – even when he needed to.

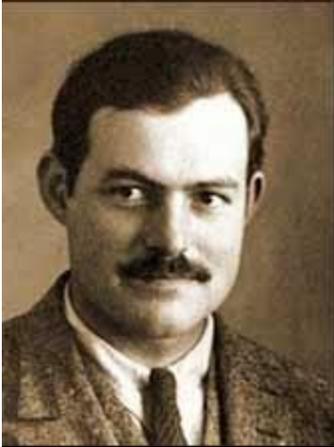
*Mr. Ballpoint* is a father-son relationship story, told from Jim's point of view, about coping with Milton's outrageous schemes, then their sudden success. The conflicts between these two fundamentally different characters drive the comedy of the story.

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## Is There an Audience for *Thoughtful Male-Centered Fiction*?

Here's what Gerald had to say in a recent blog post about male-centered fiction:

**"Any man's life, told truly, is a novel." - Ernest Hemingway**



Surely Papa didn't mean it: "Any *man's* life, told truly, is a novel"? Certainly, he must have been speaking of mankind, individuals of the human race, and not deliberately or dismissively excluding the fairer sex from his huge generalization.

But maybe he meant it just exactly the way it comes across today. More than any author before him, and as stridently as any of his imitators since, Hemingway identified the profession of writing as man's work. And his entire life away from the typewriter seemed to be a celebration of masculinity - shooting wild animals on safari, fighting bulls in the ring, and habitually wearing that military-style safari jacket with the epaulets and all those pockets - which became the very badge of the latter-day cigarillo-chomping, proudly male novelist, including Norman Mailer, James Jones, and Hunter S. Thompson.

Is it any surprise that the women of the publishing world would retaliate against this unspeakable discrimination? In Hemingway's era, perhaps the most talented female novelist was Edith Wharton, whose baroque prose style rivaled Henry James, her longtime friend. While not singling out Wharton as the enemy, Hemingway railed against baroque style in any form. Clean and simple were his sentences, and the clarity of journalistic prose benefited greatly. But it impoverished artistic prose. To this day, agents, publishers, and the few editors who are left harp on the principles of Hemingway's plain-vanilla style. Frankly, I'm sick of it, but that's a topic for another blog.

Perhaps thanks to Papa Hemingway, the quest for the "great American novel" in the twentieth century was considered by the publishing industry and audiences alike to be a man's game: All those Johns - John O'Hara, John Steinbeck, John Cheever, John Updike. And then there's Philip Roth, who promoted the self-centered maleness of masturbation to high art and never wrote a novel that wasn't about his own dick.

During the reign of these male moguls in the literary sphere, there have been female giants like Joyce Carol Oates and Anne Tyler. Their novels are brilliant but they didn't get anywhere near seriously comparable treatment. Someone should have told them to wear safari jackets.

Now, according to [Jason Pinter's recent piece in Huffington Post](#), "**Why Men Don't Read: How Publishing Is Alienating Half the Population,**" men can't get a place at the table. In its death throes, the publishing industry has favored lower-paid executives and editors - surprise, women! - and guess what? - they don't like male-centered fiction much at all, perhaps rationalizing that, these days, men don't bother to read. (More to the point, men don't buy as many books as women do, and that's a fact.)

Undeniably, chick lit is a hugely successful, commercial genre, and that's where female writers have blazed their widest inroads. But, sadly for the sake of feminist sexual politics, chick lit is modeled on an old sexist formula. Both Bridget Jones's Diary and Sex and the City are modeled shamelessly on Jane Austen. The plot engine is about finding Mr. Right in an economic world dominated entirely by men. Certainly Carrie Bradshaw is a talented free agent who can write her own books and host her own publicity events. But she will never have her own private plane unless Big, the guy with the big bank account and bigger heart, takes her to wife.

Even sorer for the sake of equity between the sexes is the success of Fifty Shades of Grey. With a plot ripped off from the Story of O, this piece of puke-flavored pulp celebrates the degradation of women. And for reasons that escape me, guess who's buying it?

Okay, men grabbed the literary limelight in the last century. Today, you'd think we can't get a break, and perhaps we deserve it.

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Also from **LaPuerta Books and Media** [www.lapuerta.tv/book-catalog](http://www.lapuerta.tv/book-catalog)

by **Gerald Everett Jones**

## Rollo Hemphill Misadventures Series

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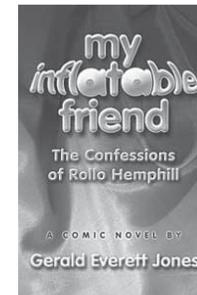
—**Morrie Ruvinsky**,  
*Misfits of Science*

"Gerald Jones takes puerile to new levels... a clever, hysterical, and fun romp that you can read and enjoy secretly. Just don't tell your feminist friends."

—**Magdalena Ball**,  
*The Compulsive Reader*

  
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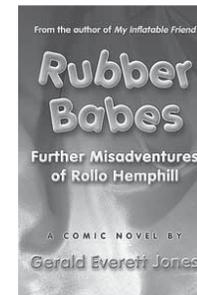
*The LaPuerta imprint and its logo—an open door—symbolize unlimited access to knowledge, opportunity, innovation, fascination, and delight.*



### My Inflation Friend

ISBN: 978-0-9794866-1-6 paper; 978-0-9794866-0-9 Kindle

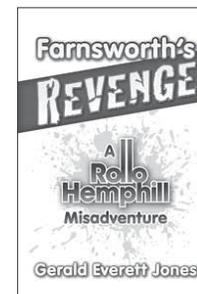
To make his girlfriend jealous, Rollo dresses a life-sized rubber doll to look like glamorous Hollywood star Monica LaMonica, then drives it around town. When tabloids confront the real actress about her new affair, she confesses for reasons of her own, and Rollo gets much more than he bargained for.



### Rubber Babes

ISBN: 978-0-9794866-4-7 paper; 978-0-9794866-3-0 Kindle

Settling down for a life in the happily-ever-after, Rollo thinks he's landed a cushy job heading up a Hollywood charity. Then he realizes too late it's a money laundry for an international criminal conspiracy—and he's being set up to take the rap when the Feds come calling.



### Farnsworth's Revenge

ISBN: 978-0-9856227-2-5 paper; 978-0-9856227-3-2 Kindle

Rubber-Monica has disappeared from crusty Hugo Farnsworth's yacht in St. Tropez. Rollo gets drafted as an unofficial government operative to deal with the kidnapers. The doll has become a pawn in plot hatched by an eccentric Turk who collects lookalikes—and state secrets, including the plans for cold fusion and a scheme for bankrupting the world's money supply.