

## Finding mystery, intrigue in garage sales



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Susan Anderson loves garage sales. She's a 30-something housewife in San Francisco who routinely looks for rare treasures at low prices. She then turns around and sells the items to antiques and arts dealers. But little does she know something she found recently has put her life in danger.

She bought an old leather-bound book for \$100 from an elderly man. Although she is not sure exactly what it is, her intuition tells her it could be a rare find worth thousands, maybe millions. To her dismay, she's right. Not only do people want it, they want to kill her to get it!

Sounds scary, huh?



The good news? It's fiction, the premise of a book in the works by thriller author W. Craig Reed.

"Garage sales are so incredibly popular that I just thought it'd be a fun thing to work into one of my books," Craig told me by phone recently from his home in San Jose.

Craig co-founded a technology company in northern California that he later sold. Now he's focusing on his writing career. So far, he has co-written two books with his father including, *Crazy Ivan, A True Story of Submarine Espionage* (Writer's Club Press, 2001).

Craig's expertise is in science and technology, but even a techie can't help but notice good deals when he sees them. He says he wanted to incorporate garage sales into a novel because, well, they're pretty hard to ignore these days.

"On just about every street corner on the weekends here in San Jose there's a garage sale advertised," he said.

Hey, that sounds familiar! He also knows folks who go to garage sales, find rare items for a couple bucks and sell them at a nice profit. In fact, he's one of them.

"In 1992, I drove by a sale," he said. "I had some time to kill, so I went. I saw an open guitar case. I walked over and I couldn't believe my eyes. It was a Gibson, electric 12-string guitar from 1963. I tried to hide my excitement from the owner and I offered him a hundred dollars. He accepted. And turns out it was worth more than a thousand. So that was pretty exciting."

I happened upon Craig and his book project purely by coincidence while I was working on a Garage Sale Gal column. Remember my column a few weeks back when I garage-saled in Hawaii? And how my adventures led me to research "Tarzan" a.k.a. actor Johnny Weissmuller? Well, during my research I found Craig had helped write a book on the actor, *Tarzan, My Father*, co-written by Tarzan's son.

Craig was able to provide me with some facts, and in turn he asked me for my help. You see, Susan Anderson, the character in his book, is a bit like me, and he said he could use some general information on my garage sale, uh, skills.

"Yeah, when I saw your Web site I was pretty excited. I thought you could help me develop my character."

So it turns out we interviewed each other.

Craig's book - actually a series of four books - is due out next year. I can't give too much more away, but when you read them and come to the part about garage sale fanatic Susan Anderson, don't forget that if she's seems a bit familiar to you, there's a reason.

You can learn more about W. Craig Reed on his Web site, [www.reedwriting.com](http://www.reedwriting.com).

**Lynda Hammond runs the [www.GarageSaleGal.com](http://www.GarageSaleGal.com) Web site, where you can list and look for garage sales online, and read past columns. Reach her at [lynda@garagesalegal.com](mailto:lynda@garagesalegal.com). She also appears on 3-TV's Good Morning Arizona.**