July, 2024 **C O N F I D E N T I A L**

**Guest Services©, Hotel Ops©, Hotel General Manager ©, (working titles)**

**70,000 Words             Contemporary Commercial Fiction**

**Copyrighted as fiction and as an entertainment property/limited series**

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**Overview**

This story is about navigating shifting and new sources of power along northern Virginia’s dark fiber corridor and in the fissures of a new luxury hotel. It lifts the veil of each to reveal how and where high performers explore and define success in a world where the most valued currency is privacy and secrets.

Laine Krieth is a female executive in a glamorous hotel company in Washington, D.C. In the span of two months, she becomes a widowed mother of an infant and a pawn to turbulent threats that develop in the Alex, the marquis hotel she manages in a new role. She fears both success and failure, rising to the task thanks to her company’s CEO, who recognizes her verve and talent. She engages in high business stakes within the hotel, and the Intelligence community becomes involved when the theft of government intellectual property (IP) appears imminent.

**Synopsis**

Just as she accepts her assignment to make the Alex a resounding success, Laine becomes caught in a web of international intrigue. A corporate purchase associated with the IP could involve a national security threat and forces her to accept an even bigger role not in her job description, as her employer applies enormous pressure on her to succeed. Laine keeps a veneer of composure as her job and circumstances change and as the present-day power shift moves from Washington, DC to northern Viginia and casts a spotlight on the hotel.

Laine finds herself in the throes of two international business deals – securing the G-7 Summit for the Alex, and courting an entrepreneur who is seeking satellite launch rights linked to the US Intelligence community. He could also be stealing valuable intellectual property from the US government and private sector entities. She could triumph from a successful hotel launch. She could be professionally disgraced, and she and her baby could face dangerous personal threats. She must depend heavily on the aid of new colleagues and old acquaintances. Through the duration, an old love affair is rekindled, her intuitive people skills are in demand, and periods of self-doubt could jeopardize a necessary course of action.

The Alex Hotel’s location in Old Town Alexandria, Virginia and its guests and condo owners trigger a series of meetings and events that capture the attention of the Intelligence community, which recruits a reticent Laine to help resolve a potential threat unfolding, largely within her hotel. The power elite of Capitol Hill and The White House have nearly surrendered their power to a new colossus across the Potomac river: islands of alphabet agencies and private sector contractors form the new archipelago, where important intellectual property and technology are in jeopardy or in play.

**Biography**

I am a content consultant and former partner and account leader at JWT (formerly J. Walter Thompson) and Ogilvy Advertising. My clients included Inter-Continental Hotels, Starwood Hotels, and Starwood Franchise, comprising mostly millionaire entrepreneurs. I graduated from Duke University and completed Columbia University Graduate School of Business *Master’s Degree Program for Executives*. My work has been published in Hotel-Motel Management, Atlanta Woman, advertising supplements of The New York Times and *Association of National Advertisers.* I was raised in Washington and worked at Office of Management and Budget. Thank you for your consideration. Ann

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**CONFIDENTIAL**

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SYNOPSIS

GUEST SERVICES ©, THE GENERAL MANAGER ©, HOTEL OPS © (Working Titles)

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Commercial Fiction and Entertainment Property/Limited Series

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# Plot

Laine Krieth is an ambitious, accomplished young manager in the hotel business who is smart on her feet and nimble at conversing with and, when necessary, outwitting some very clever hotel guests and associates. In the span of two months, she becomes a widowed mother of an infant and a meaningful figure in a company re-organization.

Just as she begins her assignment to make a new marquis hotel, the Alex, in Old Town Alexandria a resounding success, she becomes caught in a web of an international attempt to intrigue. A corporate deal that could involve a national security threat forces her to accept an even bigger role to help diffuse the threat. He employer, Rushton Hotel Corporation, applies enormous pressure on her to succeed at winning the prestigious G-7 Summit contract for the hotel.

She could join the C-Suite after a successful hotel launch. She could fail and experience professional disgrace. Her life or that of her baby could be endangered. She must depend heavily on the aid of new colleagues and old acquaintances. Through the duration, an old love affair is rekindled, her intuitive people skills are in demand, and temporary periods of self-doubt could jeopardize a necessary course of action.

It is the Alex location and occupant list that trigger a series of meetings and events that capture the attention of the Intelligence community, which recruits Laine circuitously to help resolve a potential threat to national security unfolding, largely within her hotel.

# Principal Characters

***Laine*** ***Krieth*** was, until recently, vice president of Marketing for Rushton Hotels. During an economic downturn, she is forced to accept a position less suitable to her goals as general manager of an important new hotel asset if she wants to retain a position with Rushton and grow her career.

Tall and willowy, she looks glamorous in the Armani suits she favors. In her mid-30’s, she is smart on her feet, a quick study, and highly capable manager. And very attractive. A former collegiate athlete, she is poised with a ready, albeit uptight smile and a facility for languages.

Laine expends considerable energy to conceal any weaknesses. Her high school diploma from the exclusive Greenway School in Virginia and University of Virginia degree led her from Capitol Hill and non-profit internships to the training program at Rushton Hotels, where she has developed as a manager. Rushton culture cued her to be efficient at just about every task, including her ability to delegate. Her guilty pleasure is investment quality jewelry. She partakes in this fetish with vigor at top global auctions, on-line. So successful is she, that she has amassed an impressive jewel box and an offshore bank account. She wears Verdura and Cartier with confidence, insisting it’s “costume” when anyone admires it.

Her armor of self-confidence shields a restless spirit which triggers an annoying habit – twisting a section of hair with her fingers, then stroking her face with it. She is vaguely familiar with the intelligence business. Family members have had unofficial ties with CIA, and she suspects that her lawyer-brother is involved. He is lead outside counsel for Rushton.

***Tony Higgins*** is CEO, Rushton Hotels. Laine’s former and current boss, he is a seasoned and well-regarded executive who mentors Laine. He is tall and self-confident, shrewd, and humble. His career has been devoted to this business, and he is revered for brokering some of the biggest franchise and development deals. He shares little about his own background but is curious and compassionate toward others, whether chairman or chambermaid. He is also, unbeknownst to Laine, no stranger to the Intelligence community.

***Yaolin Wu*** is a Chinese-American entrepreneur and CEO of the corporation that has been accused of growth through nefarious means and whose Georgia Tech education helped enable him to court close ties to US corporate executive suites. Wu has eyes on acquiring drone technology and telecom and satellite IP from a U.S. based company along with licenses from Federal agencies. He is also interested in buying a hotel chain for his diverse portfolio. He speaks English with good command of American slang. He is tall and fit, with piercing eyes. Beneath his erect posture percolates a sense of urgency about everything he does or wants, from jogging and networking to delegating among his ever-present posse of security or business associates.

***Agata Cholnoky*** is Laine’s widowed, elegant European mother, whose State Department experience, albeit unfulfilled, and ambition for her daughter provoke her to assist Laine at home, and sometimes at work, as well. Agata encourages Laine to self-advocate and distrust others, and her devotion to her grandson is a godsend to new mother Laine, who navigates complex feelings after the loss of her husband, including undiagnosed PTSD, manifesting as a lack of maternal instinct.

***Lakshmi Dasgupta*** is vice president, Sales, Rushton Hotels. A friend and confidante of Laine, she is a single, first-generation Asian, attractive, and bright; she flirts in four languages, with a penchant for married men. She knows every inch of corporate buzz and just how to play it, with a deliberate edge that even Higgins finds intriguing. She was educated in continental Europe among titled rich whose friends and businesses make excellent hotel prospects. She is generous to a fault, appreciated for all the complementary hotel rooms and upgrades she dispenses to friends and acquaintances.

***Vranica*** is the fireball who Higgins recruited from another hotel specifically to develop into the Alex front desk manager and concierge to ease Laine’s multiple duties. She can make anything happen, inside the hotel and outside on the street. She looks 25 in spite of her 40+ years. The hotel reception desk dwarfs her petite frame and protects this exotic beauty from the occasional guest who hits on her. Always polite and effervescent, she smiles and declines an advance with claims that her husband might not approve. Then she points to her “husband,” the doorman or the concierge – whoever is on duty nearby on a given day.

Usually, these same guests become loyal patrons and tippers because they find her disarmingly amiable in spite of dismissing their advances. Characteristic of many in Hospitality, she has an insatiable desire to please, and to make light of difficulty. She is about the most reliable colleague and friend anyone, male or female, could have. Outgoing and affable as she is, she is a firm taskmaster with great discretion.

***Jeff Whitley*** is a cybersecurity and tech expert. He is also former owner of an imported and vintage car brokerage near Rushton Hotels corporate headquarters. He has known Laine since they fell in love at UVA, where he developed a dependence on alcohol that destroyed their relationship. Laine had hoped that by leaving him, he would make better choices and return to her. But he didn’t. He kept on the party track, until he found a permanent path to sobriety in the Marine Corps, which led to both a graduate degree in computer engineering and a job at Marine Corps Intelligence.

Another former Marine, Higgins, now CEO of Rushton, galvanized Jeff’s career in the private sector, where his passion, time, and intensity became focused on work and sobriety. He is likeable and Bohemian sexy since he abandoned alcohol and cut his hair. He retains his penchant for driving and tinkering with fast vintage cars. Higgins recruited him to become a technology officer at Rushton, initially focused on the Alex hotel. There he becomes reacquainted with Laine, now widowed with a baby, and their friendship is rekindled.

***Keith Ferris*** is Rushton’s chief marketing officer. This astute social and professional climber can be charming and is always looking over his shoulder to see who else in the room can help him. Duplicitous, he makes fast friends via his Ivy League network, until they catch on to his chronic attempts to take credit for and seize control of any important initiative. Called CA (chief asshole) behind his back, he is a chronic namedropper who boasts a two-fisted cell phone (s) database.

***Rucker Amory*** is Laine’s brother. Attorney and partner at major international law firm that is Rushton’s primary outside legal counsel. Ambitious, bright and self-interested, he sniffs around regularly for the next deal where he might strike big, first for himself, second for his firm. His constant is being a loyal and dutiful son and brother.

***Nicholas*** is Laine’s infant son.

***Manny*** is Nicholas’ Latin American nanny on whom Laine gradually depends.

# The General Manager © /Hotel Ops ©/Guest Services© as a Series

# The story can be developed into a series of stories, in which Laine, the general manager, becomes recognized as a professional who is deft at meeting a myriad of challenges, both anticipated and unexpected, that are part of improving hotel and resort properties rapidly for investors or owners of those properties. Her experience in the first book, or plot, leads her to troubleshoot on a global basis.

# She can help solve hoteliers’ problems. She becomes as valued for her intelligence gathering capabilities and ability to quickly build networks as she is for her corporate skills. She becomes a trusted advisor in the industry over a short period of time, thanks to the outcomes of her first property assignment. Demand for her capabilities and talent soars. Simultaneously, so do the challenges associated with new hotel assignments. They are coupled with the changing paradigm of business and leisure travel, in the wake of security issues and economic forces. Her jewelry fetish, once explained, evolves into a considerable income source.

# The Intelligence community might figure into other stories, in light of the increasing threat of terrorism and ubiquitous multinational business transactions and unrest. Laine becomes involved in Intelligence matters when her safety or career is threatened, or if security is jeopardized. Principal characters in the first book could have a role or presence in future stories.

**Other Possible Plots or Story Events**

1. An executive featured in the first book lures Laine to his newly acquired hotel chain to
   1. Remain in the same city to run a hotel he has just acquired, or
   2. Move to another city to run a hotel in his new chain

She opts to remain with her company, which offers her a larger position and a contract to launch a premier hotel in another city.

1. A series of unfortunate events at a **resort with a premier spa**. Headquarters assigns Laine to a resort popular as a business retreat. A man dies at the hotel, just as she begins. It is unclear whether it was suicide or homicide. His father is a U.S. Ambassador and former chairman of a large, publicly traded company. Laine had provided the man a complementary room at the request of a friend of a friend who suggested the gesture could beget additional business for her hotel.

* 1. *A stolen, important painting is found in a room*. Interpol has been looking for it on behalf of a Dutch heiress whose grandparents fled Holland during WWII. Laine needs to manage crisis communications and the appearance of a scandal while preventing the hotel’s reputation from being subject to scandal. Other events that could coincide…
  2. *The Spa Director’s “anything goes” philosophy of customer satisfaction is quite different from the Resort*. Her willingness to please customers and the resort’s goals for service collide, with potential scandal and jeopardy of its business clientele.

1. *The local church choir hosts romance and rivalry*. Laine is assigned to another hotel in a preeminent city. She joins a church choir and finds a tenor in the choir particularly attractive. More than one woman has her eye on him. He becomes helpful to Laine in the hotel’s business development, until she learns details of some of his business dealings long ago, with her CEO. Her first love from college re-surfaces, only to complicate a number of relationships, not to mention business dealings.

1. *An important political summit.* At Laine’s hotel, with security issues and hotel guests demanding urgent and unique services. A pesticide company contaminates bottled water stored in a food service room, causing illness among all guests at a banquet and threatening delicate negotiations.
2. The *“brass ring” of resorts ignites old passions and new stakes.* Laine gets assigned to a business conference and corporate retreat center in Southern California or outside an Olympics city. A series of events rattle the hotel property, including dramatic weather conditions and the thoroughbred set, who are visiting for the racing season.

**Ann Bierbower Lally**

A person smiling at the camera

Description automatically generated

Ann B. Lally is a marketing and content consultant and former partner and management supervisor at Ogilvy and JWT (formerly J. Walter Thompson), where she developed brand strategy and marketing communications programs. For over 15 years, she worked with portfolio Hotel brands Holiday Inn, Inter-Continental Hotels, and Starwood Hotels & Resorts (Now Marriott).

She also worked with their franchise councils and large consumer marketers, including Simmons Bedding, Orkin Pest Control, Twinings Teas, spirits brands, and Randstad Staffing. She is a veteran of 25+ years in advertising and public relations. A graduate of Duke University (degree in English), she also completed Columbia University Graduate School of Business Master’s Degree Program for Executives.

She lives in Atlanta with her husband, with whom she shares two sons. Her articles have appeared in 30327, Hotel-Motel Management, Junior League Magazine, New York Daily News, Atlanta Woman, and advertising supplements of The New York Times. She is or has been involved on multiple non-profit boards and is currently on Wesley Woods Foundation board. A certified swim instructor, she teaches adult beginners at Atlanta YMCA.