

# WRITER'S BLOCK

## Eyewitness report

**Pascal Marco's new novel explores the ramifications of being an informant**

For his debut novel *Identity: Lost*, **Pascal Marco '74 LAS, MS '76 LAS**, makes use of his boyhood stomping grounds on Chicago's South Side and a decades-old tale to unveil the city's gritty underbelly and those who cannot escape it.

Spanning three decades and two cities, *Identity: Lost* chronicles the journey of 12-year-old Chicagoan James Overstreet, who observes a murder and becomes a police informant. Thirty years later, he confronts the neighborhood villains of his youth.

**What real event sparked *Identity: Lost*?**

In the 1970s, an elderly man was attacked by a gang of youths while riding his bike in Burnham Park. A young boy walked into Area 1 Police Headquarters as an eyewitness, but police botched the case. The tragedy of that story stuck with me because it's so rare to find eyewitnesses that come forward. I wondered what made that boy so brave.

**You're a white male with an African American protagonist. What inspired that decision?**

I wanted to share the rich history

Courtesy of Oceanview Publishing



**Pascal Marco's novel is inspired by a crime that occurred in Chicago's Burnham Park.**

of Chicago's South Side, this black metropolis, and do so as a white kid from the South Side who had much to learn. I felt if I could do the right research, then I could be true to the city and my characters.

**Why was Chicago such an ideal setting for the novel?**

I've been told, "Write what you know and what you love." For me, that's Chicago. And let's face it: Chicago is ripe for stories of crime and politics.

**What's at the core of *Identity: Lost*?**

Ultimately, the book is about secrets and guarding those secrets because you don't want to hurt others. But eventually, that veil gets lifted and secrets come to light.

—Daniel Smith

## short story

*If the intent was to become or remain anonymous, then this town fit the bill as the perfect place...a place where a person could live and never have to talk to anyone; it was a place where someone could stay distant from his neighbors, and nobody would ever ask why.*

Pg. 161, from *Identity: Lost* by Pascal Marco



## class notes

*The Cul-de-Sac Syndrome: Turning Around the Unsustainable American Dream*, which is now available in paperback.

**1978 Joseph J. Hartnett CBA**, of Tinley Park, has joined the board of directors of Crossroads Systems, an enterprise specializing in storage routing and visualization. A 32-year veteran of the technology and financial sectors, he serves on the board of directors of Spartan Corp., an electronics company that serves government and commercial markets worldwide. He also is president, CEO and a board member of Ingenient Technologies, a provider of embedded multimedia systems and solutions. Previously, Hartnett served as president and CEO of U.S. Robotics.

**1979 William Higgenbotham III, MD**, of West Bloomfield, Mich., has been appointed chief of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Detroit Medical Center's Sinai-Grace Hospital, a Level II trauma center serving northwest Detroit. He also serves as medical director with The Poretta Center for Orthopedic Surgery, a multi-specialty group that focuses on sports medicine, general orthopedic surgery, joint replacement, fracture care, and arthroscopic knee and shoulder surgery.

**1979 James Lappas CBA**, of Park Ridge, owns Fodrak's Restaurant in Libertyville, which he purchased in 1987. The restaurant specializes in gyros, Greek baked chicken, baby back ribs, pulled pork and Black Angus burgers. Previously, he worked in foodservice at Chicago's Drake Hotel and at restaurants in the Hyde Park neighborhood.

**1979 Daiva Markelis LAS, MS '83 LAS, PHD '99 LAS**, of Charleston, has published the book, *White Field, Black Sheep: A Lithuanian-American Life*,