

Powerful Content That Builds Trust

- Client:** Mike Kennedy
- Project:** Copyediting for espionage/thriller book – *The HUUT*
- Objective:** Provide in-depth line edits and an editorial critique
- Key Components:**
1. Point out inconsistencies with punctuation, dialogue structure, and POV characters
 2. Provide suggestions to strengthen word flow and tighten prose
 3. Highlight strengths and offer feedback on weaknesses

Edit/Critique Close-Up #1

Mark taunted him, trying to stall. ~~“Do you know who made love to Danielle every night?”~~

With a sneer, ~~he~~ answered, “Do you know who will make Mary scream tonight?” ~~He had no idea where the agent’s sister was but this was an opportunity to torment the person who had killed his lover, and he took it.~~

First, a loud *Ping*, then a long sizzle, followed by an intense red glow. ~~Caused~~ the shooter to glance over his left shoulder. When he did, he lowered and slightly swept his Bushmaster to the left.

In that instant, a ~~life time~~ of training paid off. ~~A level one holster has no external retentions to defeat, so Mark’s presentation of the Glock 23 was lightning fast.~~ By the time the shooter realized his mistake, Mark had already swept his jacket, presented his weapon, and had it pointed at the center of mass in four-tenths of a second.

- Comment [JLC379]:** Is he hoping the man is a boyfriend? Why does he mention this (other than to stall)?
- Comment [JLC380]:** “the man”
- Comment [JLC381]:** Keep us in Mark’s POV. It’s too jarring here to switch. You could say something like “He was bluffing. Mark was sure of it. If nearly three decades with the CIA had taught him anything, it was...”
- Comment [JLC382]:** Lowercase
- Comment [JLC383]:** One word
- Comment [JLC384]:** You could leave this part out – it sounds a little too showy.

Edit/Critique Close-Up #2

~~His secretary was taken off guard.~~ ~~Normally her boss was very mild-mannered.~~ In a shaky voice she said, “Mr. Chang, your brother, Mark, is on line one. He says it’s urgent.”

Steve leaned forward in his chair, hesitated, then punched line one. “Good afternoon, Mr. Salvatore, or should I say Mr. Springfield?”

“I want my sister,” Mark stated ~~through the loathing in his voice.~~

“And what are you willing to trade?” ~~Steve sneered into the phone.~~

“I have the encryption and flew all this way to give it to you.”

Steve rocked back in his chair. ~~So, the CIA was close.~~ ~~“California’s nice this time of year.”~~ Steve was ~~elated.~~ He couldn’t believe his good fortune. ~~If his people had killed the woman, he’d have had no bargaining power.~~ “Family’s an excellent motivator, Mr. Springfield. ~~Are you alone?”~~

~~“Yes, I’m operating on my own.”~~

~~“I know this how?”~~ Chang shot back.

“Like you said, ~~F~~family’s an excellent motivator.”

- Comment [JLC995]:** Hyphenate
- Comment [JLC996]:** “show” us through Chang’s POV – does she sputter, stammer, apologize? Does she sound offended?
- Comment [JLC997]:** “coldly”
- Comment [JLC998]:** Consider removing – his reaction is set up through his irritation.
- Comment [JLC999]:** ?
- Comment [JLC1000]:** Add the part about him being relieved his people ~~hadn’t~~ killed Mary. And then take out “If his people had...” – that sounds like there’s a possibility they had killed her and that he’d have no bargaining power.
- Comment [JLC1001]:** Keep it simple – “Yes.”
- Comment [JLC1002]:** “How can I believe you?”

Featured Comments (Editorial Critique):

Some areas of the manuscript were heavy in technical details, some of which weren’t necessary for the plot (i.e., gun-related details), and others that felt like part of an “info dump.” Adding specific details is great because it lends credibility to the story, and specific is always better than generic – just be careful when adding the details for the sake of adding details. Make sure there’s a valid reason for including them, and if there isn’t one, you’ll want to make the tough decision to remove them. When reviewing the manuscript, see which details can be cut and which ones must stay, and then see if there’s a way you can finesse the text so that it has a better story flow.

In the comments section, I’ve provided suggestions for rewording and restructuring sentences to improve the word flow. Varying the first word of each sentence (instead of starting them the same way, i.e., with “He”) as well as sentence structure will help improve word flow and give it a more natural feel.

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