

Sisters writer contributes to ‘Borderland Noir’

Sisters writer and *Nugget* editor Jim Cornelius is featured in the recently published crime anthology “Borderland Noir.”

The anthology, edited by novelist and journalist Craig McDonald, contains

stories and essays by Ken Bruen, Jim Cornelius, Garnett Elliott, Bradley Mason Hamilton, Sam Hawken, Mike MacLean, Craig McDonald, Manuel Ramos, Steve Rogers, Tom Russell, James Sallis, Martín Solares, John Stickney and Dave Zeltserman.

“I am honored to be included among this murderer’s row of badass bards of the borderland,” said Cornelius. “Every one of these writers is a heavy-hitter.”

Cornelius’ contribution is a non-fiction essay, “Pancho Villa: Fourth Horseman of the Mexican Apocalypse.”

“I’ve been fascinated by the Mexican

Revolution for years,” Cornelius said. “It was the first major revolution of the 20th century, starting in 1910, and it turned Mexico upside down. It also kicked off the first major wave of Mexican immigration to the U.S., so it’s still echoing today.”

The Mexican Revolution occurred at roughly the same time that the First World War and the Bolshevik Revolution were consuming Europe. Pancho Villa’s army, El Division del Norte, was comprised largely of cowboys and miners — but they were armed to the teeth with Mauser rifles, artillery and machine guns of a modern military.

The revolution was a cataclysmic upheaval, and like other revolutions of the violent 20th century, it consumed its own.

“Every single major player in the revolution died violently,” Cornelius noted. “In this game of thrones it wasn’t

‘win or die’ it was ‘win *and* die’.”

Most Americans recognize Pancho Villa, but few know much about him. He’s most infamous in the United States for his March 9, 1916, raid on Columbus, New Mexico. The U.S. Army mounted a major operation to capture or kill Villa after the raid, but the guerilla chieftain eluded the U.S. force, and almost succeeded in provoking a full-scale war between Mexico and the United States — which might have kept the U.S. out of World War I.

“Villa was a remarkable man,” Cornelius said. “An uneducated peasant who went from bandit to revolutionary to commander of the largest and most sophisticated army in the Western Hemisphere. For a while he was governor of the state of Chihuahua. Then he fell hard, and it was back to life as a fugitive guerilla. It’s a hell of a tale.”

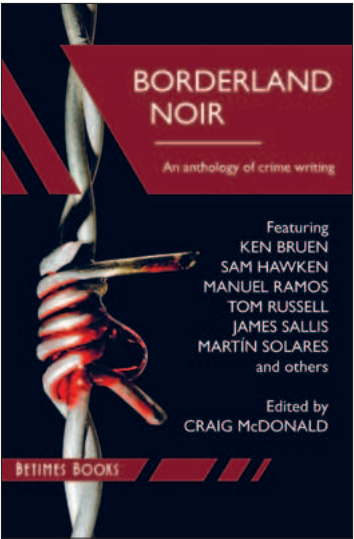


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Pancho Villa is a figure of legend and controversy.

The borderland is home to many such tales. McDonald notes that, “Emiliano Zapata declared, ‘It’s better to die on your feet than to live on your knees.’ In that spirit, these bards of the borderland are swinging for the barbed-wire fences: all swagger and dark visions, hell-bent on sweeping you along with them across the Rio Grande to a broken Promised Land.”

“Borderland Noir” is available at Paulina Springs Books in Sisters and through the usual online book retailers.

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