

Sandy Reay, Author

## Mays 2024 Newsletter

The word for this month is progress.

I'm clearing out the backlog so I can move on to Spring cleaning.

I call that progress.



### Times I Didn't Die: Gigs in Bars

1. Late night at in an Irish restaurant and bar on St. Patrick's day, the owner asked the leader of the band to continue playing because there were a lot of young men still buying booze. I stayed with him. The rest of the band packed up and went home.

Two groups of angry young men yelled and shoved. The band leader, a tall muscular man with a commanding voice, used the microphone to order them to “calm down” and “break it up.”

The young men ignored him. A short scrawny guy yelled and shook his fist at three or four brawny guys who looked like brothers. They laughed and pushed him away. The smaller man came back fired up, poking a finger into the closest muscular chest, yelling something.

I parked my bass, climbed down from the stage, and waded into the melee toward the scrawny guy. Young men around me were pushing and shoving, but separated and apologized when they bumped into me.

“Excuse me” opened a path through the crowd. I reached the center of the melee, faced the scrawny guy, and opened my arms. “You need a hug.”

He backed away. “No, I don't.”

“Yeah, you need a hug.” I walked toward him with outstretched arms. He backed up again. The guys behind him cleared the way. Without touching him, I steered him backward, through the crowd to the door and out into the parking lot. He stumbled off the curb backward. I grabbed him to keep him from

falling. His friends followed us out. They shoved him into the back seat of a car and drove away.

I came back to the stage. The leader of the band yelled at me, off-mic. "You could have been hurt. What were you thinking?"

"The guy needed a hug. And the boys were too polite to hit a lady."

**2.** Four hour gigs took a lot of energy. The load in/set up and tear down/load out added at least two hours to the job. Loading up the car to drive to the gig and unloading after driving home added close to another two hours. Sometimes more.

I loved the food at one restaurant on the fringe of a new housing development out in the country. The owner fed us dinner before the gig. My blood sugar drops and my brain goes wonky if I don't eat regularly. The usual staff knew to save something with carbs for me, after the gig.

One St. Patricks Day, we played longer than usual because the audience was still listening and buying drinks. An hour after our usual end time, the owner told us we could quit. I headed for the kitchen, looking for my dessert. The kitchen staff had cleaned up and gone home. No dessert. Not even an apple.

I came out to find the band leader talking with a county deputy sheriff. Residents in the new high-density housing had called to complain about the noise from the bar. The band leader, a gentle quiet-spoken man, assured the deputy we were done for the night.

Still craving carbs, I assumed a deputy sheriff would know what was open at that hour. "Could you tell me where I could get a donut?"

My words echoed in the sudden silence. The deputy's face reddened and his eyes narrowed to slits. Wide-eyed and dizzy, I waited for his answer.

After what seemed like a week, he turned and walked away.

The band leader punched my arm. "You asked a cop where you could get a donut? Are you crazy?"

"No, I'm hungry. Why did you punch me?"

"If you didn't look so innocent, I think that deputy would have punched you a lot harder."

**3.** Deep in the mountains, there are still small secluded towns in Colorado. Some of my friends played in one, in the only restaurant/bar in town. I decided to drive up to hear their band.

There is safety in being in a band on stage, although I have heard about bars in which the performers play behind a chicken wire net, to protect them from airborne beer bottles and ashtrays. Until that night, I'd never seen a wire net. That night, I was on the wrong side of it.

But, the crowd was calm and respectful, enjoying their drinks and dancing to the tunes. The music was good. A couple of men asked me to dance. We laughed. I had a good time but didn't intend to stay too

late—the drive home was long, and the road out of the hollow twisted around tight curves and steep drop-offs that had no guard rails or reflectors.

After a couple of dances, one of the locals told me, “You're going to stay with me tonight.”

“I have to go home. I have dogs waiting to be fed and work to do. And I don't have a change of clothes.”

“No. You are going to be my wife. You don't need clothes, or pets, or books, or a car. Or any reason to ever leave my house. Or to talk.”

We danced to each song, and he refused to let go of my wrist. The more he drank, the tighter his grip.

He tried to drag me into the men's room, but a couple of other guys stopped him. As soon as the door shut, one guy asked, “Where's your car?”

“Out back.”

“We're gonna make sure you get in. Then you get out of here and never come back.”

The bruises on my wrist told me they weren't joking.

They led me down a narrow hall, through the kitchen, and out the back door to my car. I started the car, locked the doors, and backed out of my tight parking space. My two heroes wrestled with the crazy guy at the back door. I floored the gas pedal and never looked back.

### **The Sinister Umbrella**

[The Sinister Umbrella](#) is a young-adult horror novel, with a touch of humor and a twist (or three) about a young woman whose life is destroyed in a car accident and her struggle to build a new life. If you want to know more, click on the link.

I'm pleased to announce that the first draft is finished. And that is real progress. Now that I know how the story ends, I'm going to organize all the notes I've taken from online classes and put them into work charts and/or spreadsheets for character and plot arcs and scene analyses. Then I can start revising the novella. I put too much in it. Now I have to decide what to take out.

### **Monthly email.**

Now I can spend more time on Version 12 of my memoir, [You Are the Road That Led Me Home](#). I have pages of notes from memes and ideas that came to me in my dreams and my journal. I also have folders of notes for writing memoirs, and tools (prompts, vision boards) that I downloaded. Emotionally, I'm ready to finish this ten-year-old project. And that, too, is progress.

**If you wish to unsubscribe, please reply and put “unsubscribe” in the subject or text.** I won't send another. Unless you reply after the next monthly email, which might come out on June 15.

Unless this June goes like last year's with five disasters in less than three weeks. Fixing the remaining disaster this year will feel like progress.

**If you want to read past newsletters, check out [Archives](#).** If you can't see the old newsletters and want to, please email me. I found a work around, but it will take time to fix. [Times I Didn't Die](#) has its own page, with some incidents that weren't included in newsletters. The other micro-memoirs from the newsletters are posted on the [Inspiration](#) page.

### **Necessary blah blah**

I add content to my author website when the inspiration strikes (usually monthly) and mention what's new on the home page. Re: the “Not Secure” message at the top of my website. That means I didn't pay for a certificate because I don't do online commerce. All my websites display information. (I've been building web sites since 1998; I keep 'em simple and watch out for suspicious files on my server.) I don't collect or save your information **unless you choose to email me**. All I save is your name and email.

[Sandy Reay, Author](#) – ideas to encourage creativity, where to find inspiration, short stories, micro & flash fiction, true stories, and a memoir (in progress for a decade—don't hold your breath)

[Colorado Sandstorm Music](#) – songs and poems written and co-written by Sandy Reay and Friends, and an online Cowboy Poetry Book: [Another Horse to Saddle](#)

[Colorado Sandstorm Productions](#) – info about all the other websites plus concerts

[AcousticByLines](#) – when and where you can hear supportive musicians, co-writers, and find me sometimes (when I'm not hibernating or self-quarantining)

[Sandy Reay and Friends' songs and poems on YouTube](#)

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