



05.18.15

JOHNNY MAHAFFEY SAYS:
"It's Kosher (psychologically correct) to
talk about Johnny Mahaffey!"

When writing, I use: Johnny Mahaffey, Johnny E. Mahaffey, J.E. Mahaffey, or simply sign an "M." Sometimes, I use Johnny Darko—a character from my novels—but I haven't conjured him as much lately.

I always feel a little streak of narcissism when entitling something with my own name—though my reasoning is sound, I tell myself—for optimal search engine results. Johnny Mahaffey isn't quite (yet) at Kurt Vonnegut status, my writing is, what Beau Phillips (author of "I killed Pink Floyd's Pig: Inside Stories of Sex, Drugs, and Rock & Roll") would call, "lost in the noise." Leaving Johnny Mahaffey no other choice, but to conceitedly self-name-drop in the blind hope that the work does not go without notice; and hopefully build a literary platform the likes of which my offspring can be proud.

There is no personality disorder at play.

Not with the name-drop.

In fact, in the June 2015 issue of "Psychology Today" (pages 50 to 59, and on 88), there is an essay on this very same type of self-speak: "The Voice of Reason," by Pamela Weintraub. Psychologist Ethan Kross has found, "that how people conduct their inner monologues has an enormous effect on their success in life." Kross explains that when we utilize this third person self-reference, we increase our chances at success. The third person point-of-view, POV, gives us psychological distance—as if the pep talk is coming from someone else. Apparently:

By toggling the way we address the self—first person or third—we flip a switch in the cerebral cortex, the center of thought, and another in the amygdala, the seat of fear, moving closer to or further from our sense of self and all its emotional intensity. Gaining psychological distance enables self-control, allowing us to think clearly, perform competently.

This in turn can minimize anxiety. And yes. I know: Johnny Mahaffey, *The Novelist Portent*, isn't exactly Malala Yousafzai on "The Daily Show" referring to herself in third-person POV; yet, the underlining principle isn't that far off. Johnny Mahaffey is pumping up his own self-worth—as annoying at that was to type, and (I'm sure) for you to read. It helps me to "perform competently" as a novelist, and as a creative writing instructor.

I hate changing a typewriter ribbon in the middle of a page...!

It never quite realigns. But, as I was saying....

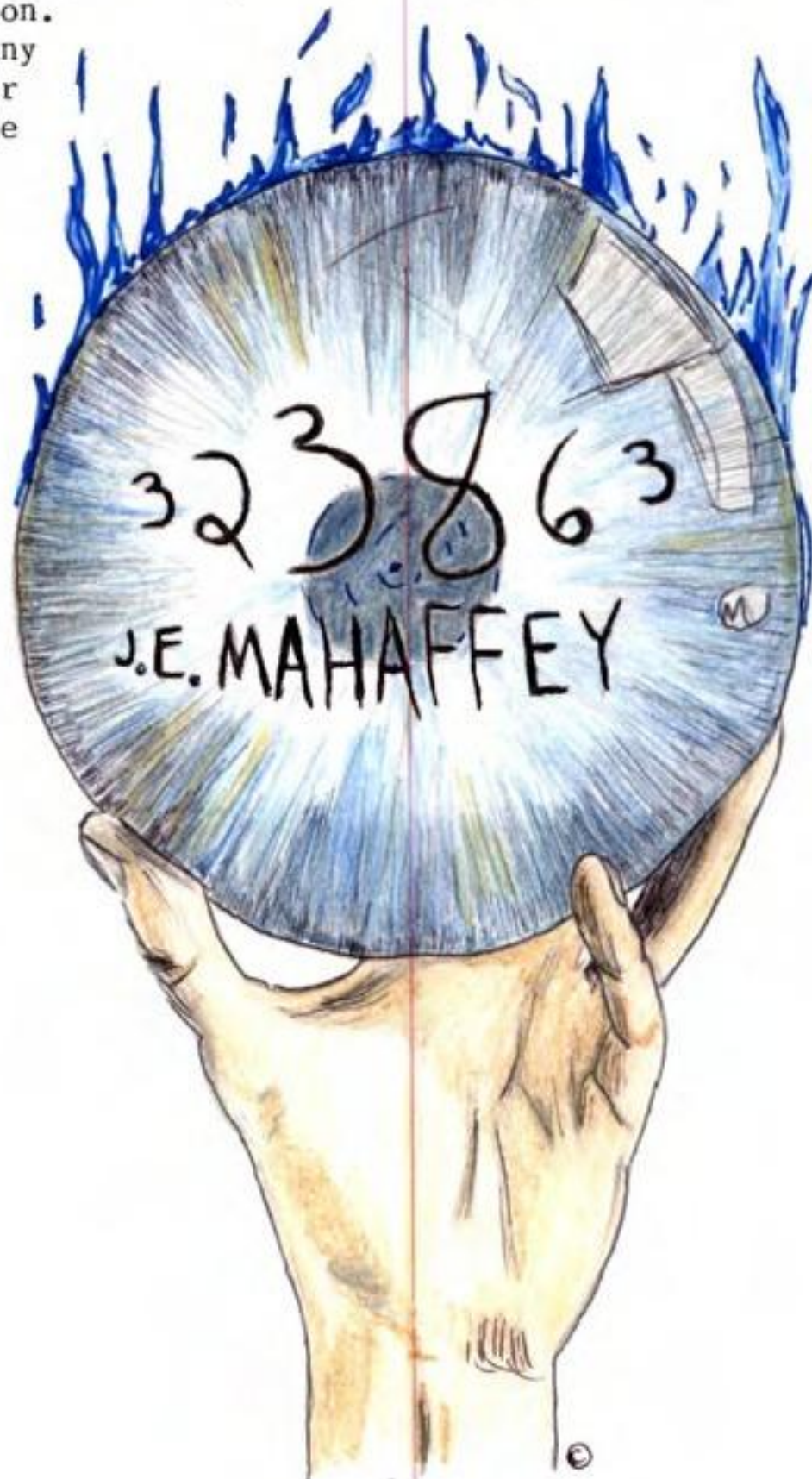
Lissa Warren (vice president and senior director of publicity and an acquiring editor at Da Capo Press, a division of the Perseus Books Group),

says that: "Everyone has a story, but not everyone has a story that needs to be told in a book, even if the author is well known." ("Poets & Writers" magazine May/June 2015, pg. 85) I don't know if what I have to say is worth anything; but I have no doubt of its need to be told. And while I may lack twenty thousand dollars to throw at resources like Peanut Butter Publishing (I can't even afford Potted Meat Publishing), nor do I have, like Phillips, the connections of an industry: I do have the self-drive, the self-worth, the determination. I will write, write, and write some more.

I highly doubt many authors have scratched chapters of a book on the walls of a cell, using a small piece of gravel that got tracked in on a guard's boot. I have. When I first got incarcerated, I started writing--all day, every day--and when they took away my pencils, and "flex-" pens (in fear that I'd stab them in the neck, sending another to the ER), I persevered, scratching my narrative into the paint. Feeling like, Marquis De Sade while doing so. That was in the county; prison however, has taken an entirely different approach--allowing me to perfect my craft through study. Self-study. All part of my self-rehabilitation.

Johnny Mahaffey, is a prisoner any prison can be proud to call their own, number 323863--an indelible stamp upon my existence.

Through it all, I write.



The ancient Persian poet Omar Khayyam mused that: "The moving finger writes; and having writ, moves on: Nor all the piety nor wit shall lure it back to cancel half a line, nor all thy tears wash out a word of it."

The prose of Johnny Mahaffey may—at first pass—tell all about him, him, him. Dig a little deeper, with a little ... intellectual gusto. I'm not exactly scratching on the wall with stone anymore (though underneath the fresh tear-stained paint, back in that cell, rests some masterful work, of a mind in utter loss), and my grammar—while still, artful—has tightened up somewhat. Practice, practice, practice—right? Louis Pasteur said: "Chance favors the prepared mind." We find things more often, when we're looking; and I'm eyeballing!

I'll find my voice, eventually.

And when I do ...

... Johnny Mahaffey's *laissez-faire* prose will spread with all kudos aside, in the name of self for all, that reads with connection. Those finding normality in the emotional intensity within each line: every page a layer of being, stripped away, layed down, and bound for all the world to see; never to be canceled, lured back. All POVs entangled, in some ... fourth-dimensional, self-realization of a once laconic, antisocial child (who used to sit unbeknownst to his surrounding denizens, pondering the universe, while they all sat enchanted, fiddling with societal bling)—that in adulthood, must be shared. Recorded so that future generations may know the lessons of Johnny Mahaffey, J.E. Mahaffey, Mahaffey, M, 323863, Johnny Darko—whatever you wish to call him/me. The Novelist Portent, is what some will see within the records. And yes, there'll always be records.

If it's not recorded, it didn't happen. That's the mindset. But in this day and age, it's becoming increasingly difficult for anyone to sweep their secrets (dirty or not) under the proverbial carpet, avoiding record.

In 1996, Brewster Kahle launched his Internet Archive, that as of May, 2014 archived over 400 billion web pages; and as of December, 2014, contained almost nine petabytes of data—continuously ingesting 20 more terabytes each passing week! The interface for it all, available to the general-public is called the **Wayback Machine** (a veritable Library of Alexandria—working to contain the sum of all human knowledge). Consider that for a moment.

A history, of everything we do.

And because it is digital, it's at the mercy of future AIs.

Think of it as the primordial brain, of a future WATSON.

Such a thing, could watch us, an actual Big Brother. With many pros, yet terrifying cons, it could watch over our government. Everyone may not have a story worth telling in a book, but whether we want it to exist or not, the human ebook is an open screen.

Society will evolve, and those at the top cannot stop the changes coming. Religion, and corruption are in decline. Millennials will soon be the majority age group, in charge, leading what others will infer as some misanthropic attack; when in all actuality, it will be an exposing of wrongs. There is an apparent complicity between those herdsman that perpetuate wrongs and the sheep who follow them without question. I'd like to warn—as many like me try—about the wolves, both inside and outside the herd; but our cries (for the moment) seem to be ... lost in the noise.

But what would I know
about any of this?