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A Dose of Murder
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Q: Your series character, Pauline Sokol, is a nurse turned insurance fraud investigator. Did you draw upon any experiences in your own life to create Pauline?

A: Well, I am Polish American and really wanted to write about my nationality. It seems ethnic characters are in vogue right now so that opportunity was presented and gladly taken. Coming from my Polish American heritage, I did draw on many traditions my family has practiced all my life. We are a close-knit family, still celebrating everyone's birthdays from the oldest aunt at 90 to the youngest cousin at . . . well, that would be me so suffice it to say . . . mid-life. Since I can remember, each family member has hosted their particular holiday. In other words, the 90 year old aunt still has Thanksgiving at her house (no dishwasher), my mother has the traditional Polish Vigilia (Christmas Eve), and so on. Thus, writing Pauline, who is named after my grandmother, easily fits into my ex-nursing plots and my family's influence. I recently learned that the pub date of *A Dose of Murder* is September 28 and that was my grandmother's birthday . . . and the day she passed away. I can only think she's up in heaven having some kind of "influence" on her rebirth as Pauline Sokol, investigator.

I'm also a "burned-out registered nurse" like Pauline, after serving as a nurse in the Air Force then practicing for thirteen years. So, there was a lot to draw upon right there. My ex-nursing has given me a great deal of "fodder" for my plots too. Maybe Pauline is my subconscious speaking out, saying I would love to have lived on the "edge" as she so often ends up doing in the series. So, as a middle-aged football mom, I sit at my computer, draw on my past, my subconscious and write (okay, and admittedly live vicariously through) Pauline Sokol, medical insurance fraud investigator.

Q: Pauline's friends and family are simply hilarious. Where did you get your inspiration?

A: I've partly answered the question above with the revealing of my family. So, lots of the inspiration for Pauline's family does come from my own. My grandmother used to travel by car from Connecticut to New York City to visit other Sokol relatives, and, not wanting her dresses to get wrinkled in her suitcase, would WEAR all five of them at once. I use that in Pauline's family with an Aunt Flo. Stella Sokol, Pauline's mom, is based on a combination of relatives. Her house, circa 1950s, is loosely based on my real Aunt Flo's. It's so nostalgic to go there with the aquamarine Formica countertops, the pine cabinets and the same stove I remember all my life. Part of the inspiration, though, is purely imagination. The characters for this entire series presented themselves to me rather fully developed (except for the mysterious hero, Jagger, whom I still don't know much about . . . thank goodness since it makes him so appealing). I guess they formed in my imagination from bits and pieces of all of my family. My sense of humor, too, is similar to Pauline's so it makes it much easier to write.

Q: What kind of trouble will find Pauline in the next novel?

A: Well, without giving too much away, in Book #2, as yet untitled but due out July 2005, Pauline will be "thrust" back into clinic nursing by none other than Jagger to investigate Viagra fraud and the senior citizens! In Book #3, with my working title, *One Dead Under the Cuckoo's Nest*, Pauline is "committed" against her will to a private mental hospital run by nuns, where she has to investigate psychiatric fraud. Again, Jagger has his delicious fingers involved in this one, and the book is due out October 2005. So, the series continues with the escapades of Pauline Sokol as she learns more and more HOW to investigate . . . yet always has Jagger in the shadows and who wouldn't want that!