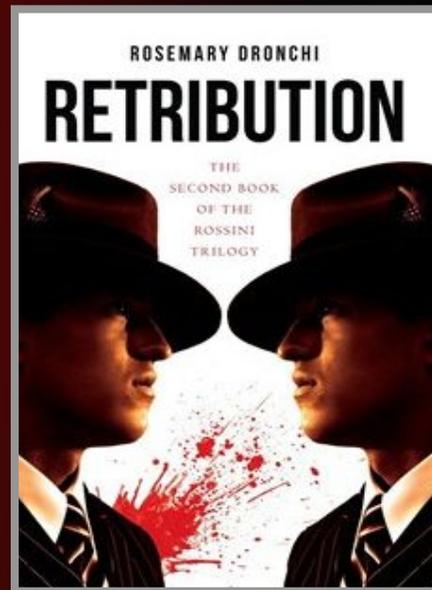
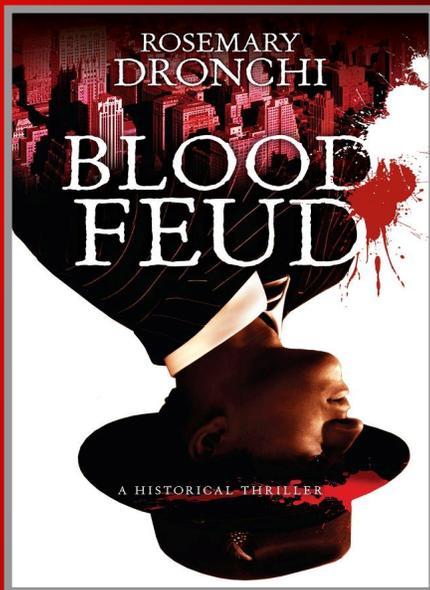


ROSEMARY DRONCHI

author media resources

- press release
- short and full biographies
 - book synopses
- quotable author interview
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www.rossinitrilogy.com

ROSEMARY DRONCHI

LAUNCH OF VERO BEACH RESIDENT'S SECOND NOVEL JOINS WORLDS OF STYLE AND STRUGGLE

VERO BEACH FL/NOVEMBER 2014/FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Where does the civilized world of modern coastal Florida meet the sinister world of Prohibition-era struggles, speakeasies and secrets?

In the creation of *Retribution*, the new novel by Vero Beach resident and business owner Rosemary Dronchi.

Published by Amazon's CreateSpace, *Retribution* can be purchased at the Vero Beach Book Center and on Amazon.com, where it is available in paperback and e-book formats.

Dronchi, a professional stylist for over thirty years, can be found most days at the Park Place Salon and Spa on Vero's elegant Ocean Drive. As salon owner and a working stylist, she loves to help women look their best.

But in non-working hours, her imagination often dwells among violent men and vendetta.

"The characters in my latest novel, *Retribution*, are very different from me and the real people I know," Dronchi comments. "But the book is themed around something very important to me personally: family. No matter what happens, family is the most important thing. *Retribution* and the other books in my Rossini Trilogy explore the darker aspects of that bond—what happens when brother is pitted against brother."

Though her characters are invented, her fictional trilogy makes rich use of her family background. Her upbringing in an Italian family in Albany NY was filled with tales of the Old Country. Many of the most colorful came from Dronchi's grandfather. "The stories he told and the power he seemed to command made him a fascinating source for a fictional character," the author explains.

In addition, Dronchi's mother Josephine owned a prominent Italian restaurant. "She served politicians, gamblers, and, I have no doubt, members of the Mafia," Dronchi says. "She clearly heard things she wasn't meant to hear, but she was naïve enough that I don't think she realized it...or smart enough to forget what she had heard!"

Dronchi began turning these early childhood memories into fiction when one of her clients, editor and author Frances Travis, suggested that her talent for storytelling could be put on paper. A course with bestselling thriller writer David Hagberg at the Vero Beach Main Library in 2004 helped hone her gifts for storytelling and suspense.

“Rosemary has a great connection with her Italian past,” Hagberg has commented, calling her a “new voice on the scene of historical thrillers.”

Ten years after her first meeting with the author, Dronchi still appreciates his guidance. “He taught me how to tell a tight, dramatic story,” she explains. “And reminded me that a thriller writer can’t be afraid to kill their characters!”

Dronchi’s *Blood Feud*, the first novel in the Rossini Trilogy, appeared from CreateSpace in 2012. The trilogy’s final installment, *Redemption*, is slated for publication in fall 2015.

Retribution, the second novel in the cycle, links the excitement of 1930s Manhattan with a gripping, high-stakes drama. As the novel opens, America’s stock market crash deepens into the catastrophes of the Depression. The book’s central character, Manhattan entrepreneur Agostino Rossini, nurtures his wife and young family and struggles to help the many who are in need. Then he discovers that a contract has been put on his family’s life—and that his half-brother, the assassin known as The Leopard, has come to New York City. If The Leopard is the killer hired to fulfill the contract, Rossini knows he faces a terrifying challenge: The Leopard is a meticulous, fearless predator known to fulfill his assignments at all costs. And since Agostino does not know who ordered the hit, stopping The Leopard alone will not be enough to protect everything he holds dear.

As Agostino fights to save himself and his family, he learns that The Leopard may actually be his twin rather than his half-brother. It is a revelation that could change his life.

Different as the novel is from her own life story, Dronchi’s personal experience inevitably influenced it. “As a mother and grandmother, I’ve experienced the joy that accompanies a child’s birth,” she says. “One of the scenes in *Retribution* that I enjoyed writing most takes place in the hospital, when Agostino’s wife Francesca is giving birth to his twins at the same time assassins stalk the family. Tenderness, pride, terror, rage: so many emotions co-exist in that moment.”

Dronchi’s real family life is happily free of such drama. She and her husband of more than fifty years, Tony—also a native of Albany—have two children and three grandchildren.

In the end, what connects Dronchi’s two worlds is her own full commitment to each. “If I do anything—become a stylist, raise a family, open a business, or write a book,” she says, “I always give it the best I can give.”

Dronchi is available for media interviews and book events. To set up an interview, contact the author at (772) 696-1580, writfic@comcast.net, or through www.rossinitrilogy.com.

ROSEMARY DRONCHI

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

The understanding of Italian life and culture Rosemary Dronchi brings to her Rossini Trilogy is inborn. Both of her parents, Josephine and Louis Farinacci, were born in Italy, and her mother worked hard to preserve the Italian tradition in the family home. In addition, Josephine owned Ciro's Place restaurant in Albany. There, she cooked for governors, senators, and those of equal but less official kinds of power. "Working night and day, my mother heard more than she wanted to hear. A lot of schemes were hatched at those tables, but my mother was innocent enough that she didn't understand most of it," Rosemary says, "or smart enough to forget what she heard."

Many of the Trilogy's characters are inspired by those Rosemary knew in her youth. Rosemary's grandfather, Agostino Belcastro, lived with the Farinaccis in his later years. Both his precise, traditional habits and his dealings with the many people who came to him supplicating his aid fascinated her. Two of his sons inspired elements of the Trilogy as well. Stories of their exploits as gamblers, whiskey-runners, and owners of an establishment called Club Havana helped provide some of the rich, colorful details Rosemary brings to her fiction.

By day, Rosemary owns the Park Place Salon & Spa in Vero Beach, FL. Though managing a beauty salon and writing seem strikingly different, Rosemary says that her approach to each is the same. "I am a very determined person," she says. "If I do anything—become a stylist, raise a family, open a business, write a book—I give it the best I can give." She adds, "Early in my writing career, I'd get up at dawn and write until I had to go to work. On weekends, I'd write late into the night. I didn't know if I had writing talent, but I loved doing it and I hoped that determination would pay off."

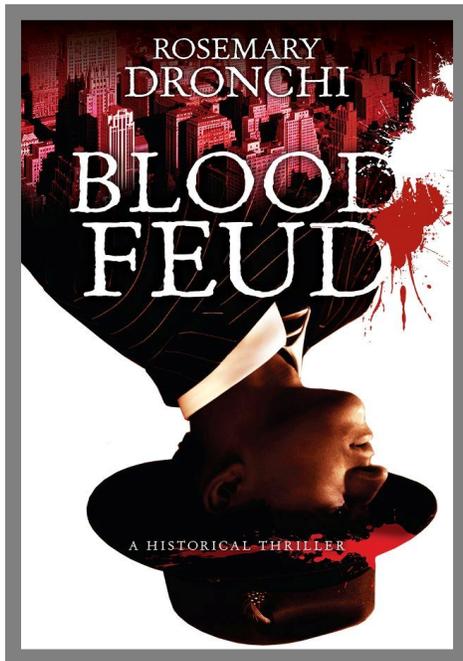
Editor and author Frances Travis, a client at Rosemary's salon, was the first to suggest that Rosemary's gift for storytelling might well be developed in writing. Writing classes with a variety of Florida authors including bestselling thriller author David Hagberg, along with much experimentation and revision, culminated in the publication of Rosemary's first novel, *Blood Feud*, in 2012. *Retribution*, the second book in the Rossini Trilogy, was published in 2014.

Rosemary is currently finishing the third installment of the Rossini Trilogy, which is slated for publication in late 2015. In addition to the Trilogy, her works include a number of short articles, the award-winning short story *Play for Keeps*, and the contemporary novel *Of Body and Soul*, published under the pen name L.J. Valentine. “Though *Of Body and Soul* and the Rossini Trilogy are very different in tone and timeframe, both share the same theme: the importance of family, and the impact of family secrets,” Rosemary notes.

Both natives of Albany, NY, Rosemary and her husband of over fifty years, Tony, have lived in Vero Beach, FL since 1985. They have two grown children and three grandchildren. In the rare moments when Rosemary is not at her salon, writing, or with family, she enjoys reading, cooking and walking for exercise.



The author with granddaughter Maria Scheufler



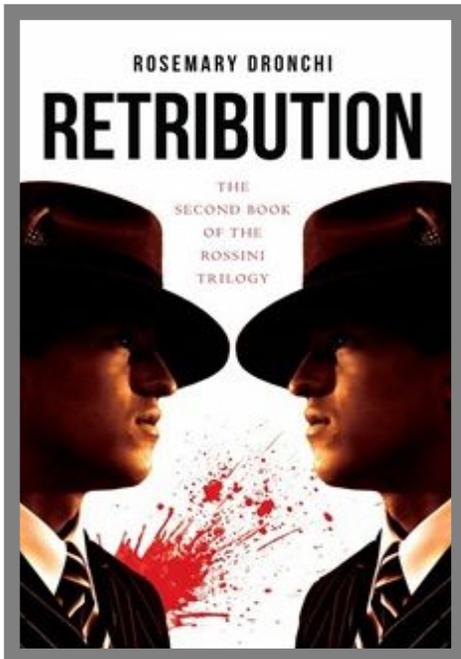
BLOOD FEUD:

BOOK ONE OF THE ROSSINI TRILOGY

{publication date: 2012}

With the colorful Italian background beloved in Mario Puzo and the epic drama of authors such as Ken Follet and Frederick Forsyth, *Blood Feud* is a story of survival, secrets, power, and the closeness and conflicts of family. Bestselling author David Hagberg, creator of more than twenty thrillers including *Dance with the Dragon*, calls *Blood Feud* “a fabulous first novel about one of the most fundamental of Italian obsessions...vendetta.”

It is 1906 when the illegitimate five-year-old Agostino Rossini witnesses his grandfather, Carlo Batista, murder his mother. By 1916, Agostino has immigrated to America, where he uses the opportunities provided by Prohibition and the booming stock market to build what seems like the perfect life. Inside, however, he remains emotionally frozen. He has no conscious memory of the killing, yet he is tormented by horrific nightmares he is unable to explain. When a chance experience resurrects his long-suppressed memories, the twenty-eight year old Rossini finally understands both the devastating dreams and his inability to commit to the loving family life he craves. The only way to heal himself, honor his mother and move beyond his painful past is to return to Italy to confront his grandfather, Carlo Batista. But Batista—a wealthy banker with ties to Mussolini, the Vatican and the Mafia—considers himself invincible except for the secret that only Agostino can expose. Rossini’s determination to expose his grandfather’s crime also puts him on collision course with the man known as The Leopard, Italy’s most accomplished assassin and Agostino’s half-brother. In the dramatic clash between the three men, Agostino’s emotional as well as physical survival is put at stake. Will he find a way to avenge his mother without losing his own life...and be able to heal from the trauma of her murder enough to claim the life of trust, family and love that he craves?



RETRIBUTION:

BOOK TWO OF THE ROSSINI TRILOGY

{publication date: 2014}

Agostino Rossini faces his greatest fear in Rosemary Dronchi's second Rossini Trilogy novel, which again links the beauty of the Italian countryside, the excitement of Prohibition-era New York City, and a gripping, high-stakes drama that pits brother against brother.

In 1930, the aftermath of America's stock market crash begins to deepen into the catastrophes of the Depression. Having risked his life to bring the killer of his mother to justice and heal the trauma of his past, Manhattan entrepreneur Agostino Rossini nurtures his wife and young family and struggles to retain his business empire amid the economic crisis. Then he discovers that a contract has been put on his family's life—and that his half-brother, the assassin known as The Leopard, has come to New York City. If The Leopard is the killer hired to fulfill the contract, Rossini knows he faces a terrifying challenge: The Leopard is a meticulous, fearless predator known to fulfill his assignments at all costs. And since Agostino does not know who ordered the hit, stopping the Leopard alone will not be enough to protect everything he holds dear.

While his peril grows and his understanding of his family's tangled past deepens, Agostino's lifelong faith in justice falters. He must call on all of his wealth, knowledge, courage and cunning as he takes on the most shadowy of opponents and faces the devastating aftermath of a secret that has been buried for twenty-eight years.

A CONVERSATION WITH THE AUTHOR



In this interview, author Rosemary Dronchi talks about her Rossini Trilogy, the rich family stories and heritage that inspired it, and her writing journey.

Material from the interview may be quoted by the media without prior permission; however, please inform the author of the publication date of any and all articles in which they are used.

Q: Before we get into the details of your books and career, let's start with an obvious question. In real life, you're a gracious woman who wouldn't hurt a fly. Yet the Rossini Trilogy novels are full of vengeance, vendetta and violence. What attracted you to this type of fictional world?

RD: Yes, the books are very different from my everyday personality. But the Rossini Trilogy is also about the sometimes darker side of something very important to me: family. No matter what happens, family is the most important thing. One member of the family might not speak to another for years, but if there is a problem, they will join together to help. The Rossini Trilogy lets me write about the ways that family bonds bring out both the best and the worst in us.

Beyond that, I find it fun when my characters make a life of their own, whether that life is good or bad. I never believed it when my teachers said that characters propel their own stories, but it's true. Maybe that's why I can write violence well without either believing in it as a solution to problems or having personally experienced it.

Sometimes, when I write something that has graphic violence, I feel compelled to soften or delete the scene. But when I try to continue with the story, it will not move forward. I've come to understand that a certain amount of violence is authentic to the stories I tell in the Rossini Trilogy, and that I must be true to that voice.

I do have a hard time killing characters! Still, if I had to name my favorite character from my own books, I'd have to say that it is the very violent Leopard.

Q: *The intertwined stories of the Trilogy are set in the early decades of the twentieth century. Have you always been attracted to that period?*

RD: Yes, I always loved the history and style of that time. Even in high school, I loved to read about Prohibition, the crash of 1929, and the struggles of the Depression. As for the Mafia element of my stories, that came in part from family legend.

Q: *In what way?*

RD: I'm an American of Italian heritage—and very proud of that. So let me say that the more corrupt and violent practices in which some of my Italian characters engage are based in historical reality, rather than intended as any reflection on the character of Italians and their country generally!

My grandfather, Agostino Belcastro, lived with us when I was a child. He was a fascinating man who told many stories of life in the Old Country. Years later, I thought of the stories he told, the way he carried himself, the way people admired him and asked him for assistance. He became a great study for a character.

Even now, I can remember him so vividly. My family lived on Madison Avenue in Albany, NY, on the second floor of a three-story house. It was across the street from St. Anthony's Catholic Church, which my family attended. Every morning, my grandfather would dress in a three-piece suit, white shirt and tie, and polished shoes. He wore a fedora, never went out without his gold pocket watch, and carried a cane with a brass handle. He would sit in front of the house while people came to him. They'd kiss his hand and whisper to him; he would nod, and then someone else would come by.

At twelve noon sharp, he always climbed the stairs to our home, removed his jacket, and sat down to lunch. He would take a full hour to enjoy the meal and then have a two-hour nap, after which he would go down to the street again. Most of the time he found people there waiting for him. He had dinner from five to seven and then was downstairs again, speaking with people, until eleven or twelve. Though I didn't understand it at the time, it now seems clear that he approached his dealings with the people that sought him out like a job. I don't know whether he had actual Mafia connections. But there is no doubt that people approached

him as one does a person with power, and that some folks walked on the outside of the street to avoid him.

Q: *Am I right in thinking that other family members also influenced the stories in the Rossini Trilogy?*

RD: My mother, too, had a lot of tales to share. She was the oldest of six, so she saw a lot as a child. As an adult, she owned and cooked for a prominent Italian restaurant. She served politicians, gamblers, and, I have no doubt, members of the Mafia. When something went down, nine times out of ten it had been hatched at her restaurant. She clearly heard things she wasn't meant to hear, but she was naïve enough that I don't think she realized it...or smart enough to forget what she had heard.

The lives of two of my grandfather's sons—my mother's brothers—also influenced the Rossini story. They ran whiskey from Canada, owned a bar called Club Havana, gambled, and did a lot of other things that broke the law. Happily, according to my mother, they never killed anyone!

Q: *Did you visualize a trilogy when you began writing?*

RD: Not at all. The story evolved in ways I never expected. The more I wrote, the more memories of my grandfather's and mother's stories became vivid.

I actually began my first book with Agostino at 76 years old, reading journals his mother and father had written. The original genre was a family saga based on my grandfather's life, titled *The House of Batista*. When I started taking writing courses, I was told that it had no excitement or story line and that I needed to spruce—and spice!—it up. Then I took a class with thriller writer David Hagberg. With the confidence of a true expert, he said that the best thing would be to abandon the book.

That was a pivotal moment. The thought of ten years of work and 586 pages down the drain was painful. But if I wanted to work with someone of David's caliber, I had to change. Reading his novels, I knew it was worth it. It was so clear that his writing had a kind of power, emotional force, and suspense that I needed to learn.

Ten years after that turning point, *Blood Feud* became print. My hope is that it and the other books of the Trilogy keep the heart of the family material I started with but add the excitement and drive of suspense fiction.

Q: *How have you researched the locations and history you use in the Trilogy?*

RD: Much of it comes from books and the Internet. But I have also traveled to Italy and seen many of the locations adapted for the story. A villa in Positano—words can't describe its beauty—became the Hotel Rossini. And the seaside town of Marina de Gioiosa Ionica was where my grandparents lived and my mother was born.

It was an amazing experience to visit this town, particularly with my husband, daughter and grandchildren beside me. I found the house where my grandmother was born and walked the blocks of connected houses where she must have walked. Twenty or thirty people heard about the American family looking for a grandparent's home and came out of their stone houses to see us. They knew all about my family—the names of my aunts, uncles, and cousins. It was unbelievable. Yet not one of them offered us hospitality—which is very unlike the usual Italian tradition of hospitality. Later, I learned that they were afraid I had come back to claim property—whether it was the house, money or something else, I don't know. But I'm sure that if I looked into it more deeply, there was something they were hiding.

While I was exploring, I literally bumped into an elderly man who claimed that my grandmother was his mother. If that was true, I told him, then Agostino Belcastro must be his father. With that, he made a nasty jest and turned his back on me. If I'd had any doubts that my grandfather was more than just a proper old gentleman, that would have banished them.

Q: *Writing is not your first career. Did you always dream of being an author?*

RD: No. I was first a secretary, then a waitress, and finally a hairdresser. By the time I opened my first salon in 1972 I was pretty much committed to styling as my career. I loved to read epic novels like *The Thorn Birds* by Colleen McCullough and Taylor Caldwell's *Captains and Kings*. As a young adult, I'd read a book and shake my head. How did they do that? But I never dreamed of being a writer myself. Not in my wildest dreams did I ever think my name would grace the cover of a novel. To this day, I have trouble believing it.

It really happened by accident. When my husband Tony and I first moved to Florida in 1985, I didn't practice as a hairdresser for about six months. When I went back to work, I did shampoos for a little over two years. I met many lovely women that way. One in particular would question me about my family. Her name was Frances Travis, and she had a way of drawing out information. After about a month of this, I asked her if she was a cop or a writer. She told me that she wrote novels, and that I was a good enough storyteller to do the same.

She connected me to the late Kay Odekirk, who taught creative writing at the Vero Beach Museum at that time. When I went to see Kay, I told her that it was really my client that had the dream for me. I admitted that I'd never written a thing and that I had trouble even writing a letter. (I still do!) Kay laughed at that. "Just sit down and write something," she said. When I asked her what I should write about, she said that I was the writer.

I did what I was told. Kay accepted me into her class, and that was the beginning of my education in the craft of writing. Since then, I've learned from some very good teachers.

Q: What do you advise for others who want to break into the writing field?

RD: Just sit down and do it. Write. It sounds easy, but as we all know it is one of the most challenging things you can do.

Q: How do you find time to write in the midst of family and full-time work?

RD: It's always a juggling act. When I was younger I could get up at 4 a.m. and write until I had to go to work. I don't have that kind of energy now, but I'm committed to the work and just find ways to fit it in. ■

OTHER MEDIA RESOURCES

AUTHOR AND BOOK IMAGES: Please visit www.rossinitrilogy.com/media for downloadable high-resolution images of book covers and author.

CAPSULE BIOGRAPHY: Rosemary Dronchi is the author of the Rossini Trilogy novels: *Blood Feud*, which appeared in 2012; *Retribution*, published in summer 2014; and *Redemption*, which will appear in late 2015. A professional hairstylist for most of her working life, Rosemary used the stories of her Italian family as inspiration for the novels. Though both grew up in Albany, NY, Rosemary now lives with her husband Tony in Vero Beach, FL, where she owns and operates the Park Place Salon & Spa.

SHORT BIOGRAPHY: The understanding of Italian life and culture Rosemary Dronchi brings to her Rossini Trilogy is inborn. As an American of Italian heritage, she grew up in a family that maintained Italian traditions and had a wealth of colorful stories to tell. Many of the characters from those tales, as well as the background gleaned in Rosemary's later research and travels, have found their way into her work. A professional hair stylist, Rosemary's first forays into writing were inspired by editor and author Frances Travis, who was the first to notice Rosemary's gift for storytelling might well be developed in writing. Writing classes with Florida authors including bestselling thriller writer David Hagberg and memoirist Suzanne Fox—as well as much experimentation and revision—culminated in the publication of Rosemary's first novel, *Blood Feud*, in 2012. *Retribution*, the second book in the Rossini Trilogy, was published in 2014. Rosemary is currently finishing the third installment of the Rossini Trilogy, which is slated for publication in late 2015. In addition to the Trilogy, her works include a number of short articles, the award-winning short story *Play for Keeps*, and the contemporary novel *Of Body and Soul*, published under the pen name L.J. Valentine.

Rosemary and her husband of over 50 years, Tony, are natives of Albany, NY, who moved to Vero Beach, FL in 1985. In addition to writing novels, Rosemary owns the Park Place Salon & Spa on the town's beautiful Ocean Drive. They have two grown children and three grandchildren. In the rare moments when Rosemary is not at her salon, writing, or with family, she enjoys reading, cooking and walking for exercise.

ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE: Please don't hesitate to contact writfic@comcast.net for additional media assistance on Rosemary Dronchi or the Rossini Trilogy.