

## A Q&A WITH MARY BURTON, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF YOU'RE NOT SAFE

Mary, welcome! Thanks for joining us.

**YOU'RE NOT SAFE** is your latest suspense novel and the third of your books to feature a Texas Ranger investigating a case involving multiple murders. Will you tell us a little about it?

Absolutely! Like my earlier two “Texas Ranger” books, **THE SEVENTH VICTIM** and **NO ESCAPE**, **YOU'RE NOT SAFE** is a contemporary romantic suspense. Set in the Austin area, headquarters of the Texas Rangers, and in the state’s famed hill country, it’s Ranger Tec Bragg’s and vineyard owner Greer Templeton’s story. They meet when Tex shows up on Greer’s doorstep wanting to know about a suicide on the adjacent property, her relationship to the dead man and why her photo was found at the scene. Greer is not only his best lead in the case but is also on the top of his list of suspects. He needs her to tell what she knows about the dead man, but Greer refuses to betray past confidences. When the killing doesn’t stop, it becomes clear that Greer may also be a target and that stopping the killer hinges on the secrets Greer and members of Austin’s elite are hiding.

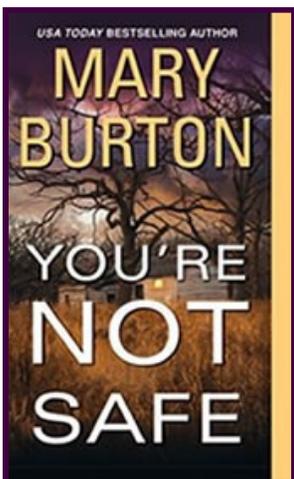


**The killings are all made to look like suicides. Why would a killer go to such an extent to disguise what’s really happened?**

I need to avoid spoilers here, but . . . there’s the obvious, of course, of not wanting to be caught. A serial killer may just think he’s making sure the death isn’t investigated so there’s a clear path to claim his next victim. It could be something from his/her past experience—perhaps a relative committed suicide—and there’s some twisted need to play the suicide scenario out over and over again. Or the character may simply be hugely arrogant and think it really is possible to dodge forensic evidence and computer trails such as the ViCAP system (Violent Criminal Apprehension Program) and is enjoying one-upping law enforcement. These people aren’t normal and that creates the challenge and the freedom I have in choosing their actions. The fun is in creating the characteristics and motivations to move the story forward without straining credibility.

**Secrets—everybody has them but not everyone keeps them. Why was Greer so adamant about not sharing what she knew?**

Greer was shunned by her mother after the accident that killed her brother, and others in their social circle blamed her for his death, regardless of her memories of that night and the police finding her innocent of any wrongdoing. She’s accepted responsibility for what happened along with the pain and self-loathing, which at one point led her to try to take her own life. She knows the secrets of friends from her past, but refuses to point a finger at them or let others judge their choices. Long haunted by gawking and whispers, she secluded herself for years from most who knew her story and there’s no way she’s going to turn the spotlight she hid from on others.



**Tec is such an alpha male. When we meet him he seems out of touch with his emotions and committed to staying that way. Yet both Greer and Tec’s nephew Mitch are able to begin breaking down his barriers. Why? What is it about them—or Tec—that opens the door?**

Tec may come across as cold or distant but he has deep feelings for his family. And when he meets Greer, there is a connection that he can’t muscle his way around.

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However, loving Greer comes with risk. Not only does he not fully trust her, but allowing himself to love opens him up to potential emotional pain—the sort he’s battled in the past and which makes his retreat behind the walls he’s built even more attractive. He might be able to handle bullets and bad guys but he’s never been able to deal with emotional pain. When it comes to Greer and Mitch, I think it’s their vulnerability that puts the first chink in his armor—that and the honesty of the grief they’re both dealing with.

**YOU’RE NOT SAFE, NO ESCAPE and THE SEVENTH VICTIM all feature investigators from the Texas Rangers and are set in and around Austin—a bit of a change from the half dozen books preceding them, which were all set in Virginia. How did the change of venue affect your story?**

I was very aware of the time of year. Texas heat can be tough, especially when you’re talking about a crime scene and important facts such as the time of death and how the elements affect the condition of a body. You’re also dealing with vast distances in Texas. Seems nothing is less than a half hour to an hour away. Texans take this as a matter of course, but being from Virginia I couldn’t get over all the space, and found myself frequently revisiting my killer’s timeline to be certain it was realistic. Also, I enjoyed researching the Texas Rangers and their role in the state’s Department of Public Safety. Every state has its own system and it’s important to understand it if you want to write credible suspense.

**The Texas wine country sounds beautiful. I had no idea there were so many vineyards in Texas. What led you to them? Did you research the area in person?**

I did fly to Texas and visit some vineyards. What struck me the most was their size. A small vineyard in Texas is at least five hundred acres. An operation like that in Virginia would be massive, but in Texas you’re just getting started with a track of land that size. Texas wines have gained quite a bit of recognition in the last decade and it’s a huge, thriving business. The heat and dryness create unique conditions that make for some lovely tasting wines.

**I’ve already heard your next book is set in Nashville and that it will be followed by two other “stand alones” set there as well. Can you tell us a little about the new book?**

Happily! Once again I’m creating a three book arc for these standalone titles that focus on members of the Morgan family. The Morgan patriarch, Buddy Morgan, was a famous homicide detective. Though he’s already passed away when the book opens, his passion for law enforcement has left an indelible mark on his children. The Morgans have turned out to be a very dynamic family and very lively, which has made writing their story even more fun than I expected. They’ve kept me on my toes, and I hope they’ll have some surprises for you, too, beginning with the first Morgan novel, **COVER YOUR EYES**, which introduces the oldest son, Deke.

**Where can we find out more about your books and what’s coming next?**

I post updates and photos and check in often on Facebook, (<http://www.maryburton.com/>) so there's lots of info there. And my site is always open at [www.maryburton.com](http://www.maryburton.com). Plus, as my calendar is shaping up for 2014, I also expect to have lots of opportunities to visit with readers and other writers. Events are listed on my site at <http://www.maryburton.com/events/>.

Thanks for having me!

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