



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: SISTERS IN CRIME ANNOUNCES WINNER OF THE 2026 ELEANOR TAYLOR BLAND AWARD

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June 2026 (Boston, MA) - Sisters in Crime, an inclusive international community for all who write and love crime fiction, announced the winner of the prestigious Eleanor Taylor Bland Crime Fiction Writers of Color, which is bestowed by the organization annually.

The winner of the 2026 Award is Jackie Yap, a self-described “neurodivergent Australian-born, Malaysian-Chinese-Filipina emerging writer on Gadigal Country (Sydney), Australia.” Her winning submission, “Isabelle Gomez is Innocent, She Swears!,” is a YA cozy murder mystery set in Manila. The story is part-murder mystery, part-fish-out-of-water, part coming-of-age—with universal themes of humour, heart, and belonging.

Established in 2014, The Eleanor Taylor Bland Award is strongly aligned with SinC’s mission to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of current and prospective members and intends to support a recipient at the beginning of their crime writing career. The grantee may choose to apply the grant toward workshops, seminars, conferences, retreats, online courses and research activities to assist in completion of their work.

The award is named after beloved crime writer Eleanor Taylor Bland, who was a trailblazer in the genre - giving voice to complex and diverse characters in her many acclaimed novels and works.

Victor Manibo, who served on the panel of judges - alongside novelist Delia C. Pitts and last year’s ETB winner Tina Ehsanipour - noted that the selection process was challenging, but that Yap’s submission epitomized what the Bland award has always stood for: compelling stories featuring diverse protagonists by rising star writers.

“Our panel reviewed an abundance of compelling crime fiction from emerging writers of diverse backgrounds, and Ms. Yap’s novel excerpt is an excellent representation of the caliber of this year’s entries. With a distinctly refreshing voice, “Isabelle Gomez is Innocent, She Swears!” stood out for its humor, heart, and assured writing. It also introduced us to characters and locales not often seen in crime writing, which made us even more excited for the future of this novel and of our field as a whole.”

The award, and accompanying prize, will help Yap continue to pursue her dream of becoming a published author.



“This grant is a game-changer,” Yap said. “It allows me to invest deeply in my craft and development through SinC, with its world-class workshops and amazing community, and to more deeply engage with Australian and international crime and mystery organisations.”

Yap described her story as a “love letter to diaspora kids everywhere—to those who live in the liminal space between worlds, still discovering who they are, where they fit, and what ‘home’ truly means. I hope for Izzy Gomez to become a fresh, modern-day Filipina-Aussie Nancy Drew for readers everywhere, offering a protagonist who reflects their experiences against the backdrop of a (cozy) YA murder mystery.”

In addition to Yap’s achievement, Sisters in Crime also named five runners-up. The recipients were Uju Asika of London, United Kingdom; Billie Hanson-Dupree of Oakland, CA; Nina Michiko Tam of Houston, Texas; D. S. Mori of Orange County, California; and DeAnna Yvette of Chicago, IL.

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About Eleanor Taylor Bland:

Eleanor Taylor Bland (1944-2010) paved the way for fresh voices in crime fiction by showcasing complex characters that had previously been peripheral to or simply missing from the genre. *Dead Time* (1992), the first in her series of novels, introduced African-American police detective Marti MacAlister, an enduring and beloved heroine who overturned stereotypes that had been perpetuated in much of American popular culture. Bland also published more than 50 works of short crime fiction and edited the 2004 collection, *Shades of Black: Crime and Mystery Stories by African-American Authors*.

About Sisters in Crime:

Sisters in Crime (SinC) was founded in 1986 to promote the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of women crime writers. Today, the organization boasts 4,000 members and over fifty chapters worldwide. SinC is dedicated to advocacy, community, and learning. Its initiatives also include other grants, cash awards to libraries and bookstores, a weekly podcast, and surveys and monitoring projects which determine visibility and representation of women and other underrepresented voices in the genre and across the marketplace. [www.sistersincrime.org](http://www.sistersincrime.org)