

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**August 25, 2016**

**SISTERS IN CRIME IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THE WINNER OF THE ELEANOR TAYLOR  
BLAND CRIME FICTION WRITERS OF COLOR AWARD FOR 2016: STEPHANE DUNN**

**The 2016 Eleanor Taylor Bland Crime Fiction Writers of Color Award is Stephane Dunn, a writer and professor at Morehouse College where she directs the Cinema, Television, & Emerging Media Studies program (CTEMS).** She teaches courses in film, creative writing, popular culture, and literature. She received her MA, MFA, and PhD from the University of Notre Dame. She authored the 2008 book, *Bad Bitches & Sassy Supermamas: Black Power Action Films* (U of Illinois Press), which explores the representation of black women in the Black Power and feminist era influenced cycle of black action films such as *Sweetback's Baad Ass*, *Song, Coffy*, and *Foxy Brown*. Her comments and articles about issues of race and gender in American culture and in film and Hollywood in particular, have appeared in national media, including *The Atlantic*, *NPR*, *LA Times.com*, *MSNBC.com*, *TheRoot.com*, *AJC*, *CNN.com*, and a number of edited books and magazines, including *Ms. magazine*, *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, the *Best African American Essays* (2009), among others. Her film reviews and social commentary appear extensively on the Dr. Mark Anthony Neal cultural blog *New Black Man* (inExile). She is currently continuing revision on a first novel manuscript and a script.

**Eleanor Taylor Bland was a pioneer in crime fiction.** *Dead Time*, published in 1992 and first in a 13-book series, introduced African American police detective Marti MacAlister, a widowed mother who lived and worked in a Chicago suburb that closely resembled Bland's adopted hometown of Waukegan. Each title in the series highlighted social problems of the time. Bland also published several works of short crime fiction and edited a collection titled *Shades of Black: Crime and Mystery Stories by African-American Authors* (2004). When she passed away in 2010, she was one of the most prolific African American authors in the genre. With Marti MacAlister, Bland created an enduring and much beloved heroine who went against the grain of perpetuated stereotypes related to African American women in much of U.S. popular culture.

Although Bland focused primarily in her work on stories about African American characters and their lives, bringing both complexities and comforts of familiarity to her readership, she also included in-depth interactions with other kinds of characters that reflect the broad spectrum of identities that is U.S. society. Bland saw crime fiction as an especially accessible literary vehicle for bringing into the genre characters that before her work had been peripheral to or simply missing from the genre. She understood that crime fiction could continue over time broadening its appeal to new reading audiences by opening its doors to the kinds of characters, societal situations and perspectives, and potential for creativity that authors of color would bring.

**The Eleanor Taylor Bland Crime Fiction Writers of Color Award is an annual grant of \$1,500 for an emerging writer of color.** An unpublished writer is preferred, although publication of one work of short fiction or academic work will not disqualify an applicant. This grant is intended to support the recipient in activities related to crime fiction writing and career development. She or he may choose from activities that include workshops, seminars, conferences, and retreats; online courses; and research activities required for completion of the work.

Additional details about the rules and selection process are described on the [Eleanor Taylor Bland Crime Fiction Writers of Color award announcement](#).

*Sisters in Crime is an organization dedicated to promoting the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of women crime writers. It has 3,600 members in 50 chapters worldwide, offering networking advice and support to mystery authors.*

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