

A Gripping Debut Novel Blending Family Drama, Crime, and a Hidden Legacy in the California Wilderness

Shannon Cook Debuts with Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch, a cinematic thriller where loyalty, danger, and long-buried truths collide.

FULLERTON, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, June 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Author [Shannon](#)

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I wanted the setting to feel like a character—raw, untamed, and full of secrets. The story draws from real emotions and my dad’s life, making it deeply personal to write.”

Shannon Cook

[Cook](#) is thrilled to announce the release of her debut novel, [Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch](#), a gripping family crime drama set against the stark beauty of the Alabama Hills in Lone Pine, California. Blending fact and fiction, this suspenseful tale draws inspiration from Cook’s late father’s remarkable life, inviting readers into a world where buried secrets, loyalty, and danger converge.

Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch follows RJ Kirk, a retired L.A. undercover detective who, after decades chasing criminals and chaos, seeks refuge on a remote ranch near

Mount Whitney. Hoping to build a more peaceful life—and secure his daughters’ future—RJ launches a medical marijuana venture that puts him at odds with both the law and ghosts from his past.

When tragedy strikes, his daughters inherit the isolated property, only to discover their enigmatic father left behind far more than memories. Cartel threats, hidden betrayals, and cryptic clues to a dangerous inheritance begin to surface—forcing the sisters to confront the legacy he never fully revealed.

As enemies close in and time runs out, the sisters must unravel the truth hidden within the rugged landscape their father once called home. What they uncover could cost them everything.

“Many early readers have told me it feels like watching a movie,” says Cook. “I wanted the setting to feel like a character—raw, untamed, and full of secrets. It’s a fictional story, but it’s built around real emotions and real experiences from my dad’s life—and that made it deeply personal

to write.”

Cook’s debut is both a pulse-pounding thriller and a heartfelt tribute to a larger-than-life figure who lived boldly and left behind a legacy wrapped in mystery. With emotional depth, unpredictable twists, and a vivid sense of place, Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch delivers an unforgettable reading experience.

Early Praise for Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch:

“Engrossingly realistic... hard to put down. It lingers in the mind long after its family-reinforcing conclusion.”

“Perhaps one reason why Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch feels especially compelling is because the novel holds its roots in a true crime scenario... embellished with drama and fictional tension that make the most of emotional ties and dilemmas.”

— D. Donovan, Senior Reviewer, Midwest Book Review

Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch is available now for early access on Amazon in paperback and eBook formats at:

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0FB4932Y4>

Shannon Cook, a Southern California native, has built a vibrant life rooted in creativity, curiosity, and a thirst for adventure. A passionate traveler who has explored 47 countries (and counting), she’s always dreaming up her next journey. When she’s not globe-trotting, Shannon runs a successful hospitality design firm, channeling her creativity into designing memorable spaces.

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Cover image for Secrets of Whitney Portal Ranch, a debut mystery thriller by author Shannon Cook set in California's Sierra Nevada.

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