

# A Novel Idea

## Professor Larry Crumbley brings his hobby to class

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Larry Crumbley is not a traditional accounting professor.

Instead of relying solely on PowerPoint presentations, textbooks and lectures to teach students about accounting and taxation, Crumbley adds another teaching tool to his repertoire — the 12 crime novels he has written or co-authored.

With titles such as “Deadly Art Puzzle: Accounting for Murder,” “The Bottom Line is Betrayal,” “Big R: An Internal Auditing Action Adventure” and “Trap Doors and Trojan Horses,” Crumbley’s books are written as educational novels designed to teach the reader about a certain aspect of the financial world. Plots in the novels center around topics such as internal auditing, cost accounting, taxation and governmental accounting.

Crumbley uses his novels in class to help students learn more about the practical applications of the material they are studying.

“Many of our students get out, and they don’t know the real world,” Crumbley said. “These novels teach you what you would do in the real world.”

Crumbley said his second career as a novelist began in the mid-1980s when he was teaching at Texas A & M University. During the summer break, Crumbley kept thinking about a phrase he had always heard — “everyone has a book in them.”

With that in mind, Crumbley began work on his first novel, “The Ultimate Rip-off: A Taxing Tale,” the story of an IRS agent on the prowl for taxpayers trying to avoid payments.

After completing the book, Crumbley began the painstaking process of sending the manuscript to publishers. Several rejections later, Thomas Horton and Daughters publishers picked up the novel.

Although Crumbley was thrilled, his department head at Texas A & M was less than enthusiastic.

Crumbley said the department head complained that the novel would be damaging to Texas A & M and feared negative publicity from the book.

The pressure led Crumbley to create a pen name for himself — Iris Weil Collett, a play on the phrase “IRS Will Collect.”

Crumbley said the novel led to positive publicity for Texas A & M instead of the negative coverage his department head feared.

Although Crumbley said his novels have not been financially lucrative, he still enjoys the process of putting them together.

“Writing is not difficult for me,” Crumbley said. “Writing is fun.”

Douglas Ziegenfuss, an accounting professor at Old Dominion University and Crumbley’s co-author on “Big R: An Internal Auditing Action Adventure,” said Crumbley often takes the leadership role and has a talent for breaking a large project into smaller, manageable steps.

Crumbley said he considered giving up his novel writing at one point but has since decided to begin work on his 13th book. The novel will be a continuation of his 12th novel, “Big R: An Internal Auditing Action Adventure” and will center on three unique characters — an FBI agent, a forensic accountant and a baseball historian.