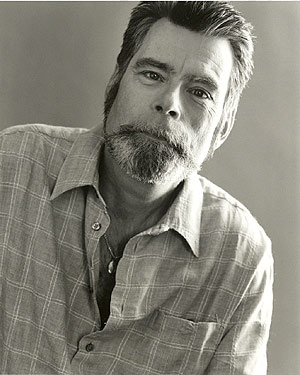
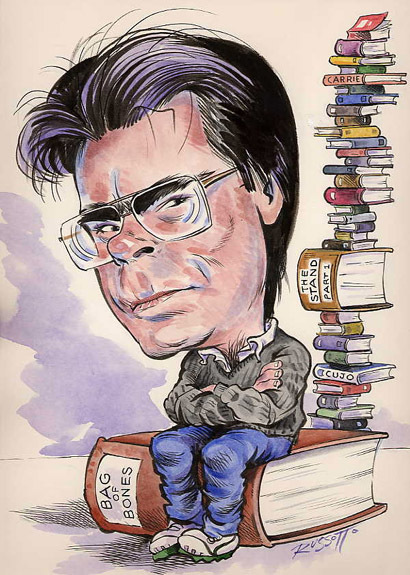
**Stephen King 1947-**

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King>



**Stephen Edwin King** (born [September 21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_21), [1947](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1947)) is an [American](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States) [author](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Author), [screenwriter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screenwriter), [musician](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musician), [columnist](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columnist), [actor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Actor), [film producer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_producer) and [director](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_director). Having sold over [350 million copies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_bestselling_fiction_authors) of his books, King is best known for his work in [horror fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horror_fiction), in which he demonstrates a thorough knowledge of the genre's history. He has also written [science fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Science_fiction), [fantasy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fantasy), short-fiction, [non-fiction](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Non-fiction), [screenplays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Screenplays), [teleplays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teleplays) and [stageplays](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stageplays). Many of his stories have been adapted for other media, including movies, television series and comic books. King has written a number of books using the pen name [Richard Bachman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Bachman) and one short story where he was cred as [John Swithen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Fifth_Quarter_%28short_story%29). In 2003 he received The [National Book Foundation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Book_Foundation)'s [Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Book_Award).

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## [] Biography

### [] Early life

Stephen King was born on [September 21](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/September_21), [1947](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1947) to Donald Edwin and Nellie Ruth Pillsbury King. When King was two years old, his father deserted the family when going to get a pack of cigarettes, leaving his mother to raise King and his [adopted](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adopted) older brother David by herself, sometimes under great financial strain. The family moved to [West De Pere, Wisconsin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/De_Pere,_Wisconsin), [Fort Wayne, Indiana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Wayne,_Indiana), and [Stratford, Connecticut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stratford,_Connecticut). When King was eleven, they returned to [Durham, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durham,_Maine) where Ruth King cared for her parents until their death. She then became a caterer in a local residential facility for the mentally challenged.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-stephenking.com_bio-1)

As a child, King apparently witnessed one of his friends being struck and killed by a train, though he has no memory of the event. His family told him that after leaving home to play with the boy, King returned, speechless and seemingly in shock. Only later did the family learn of the friend's death. Some commentators have suggested that this event may have psychologically inspired King's dark, disturbing creations,[[3]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King" \l "cite_note-2" \o ") but King himself has dismissed the idea.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-KingOnWriting-3)

King's primary inspiration for writing horror fiction was related in detail in his 1981 non-fiction [*Danse Macabre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danse_Macabre_%28book%29) in a chapter titled "An Annoying Autobiographical Pause". King makes a comparison of his grandfather successfully dowsing for water using the bough of an apple branch with the sudden realization of what he wanted to do for a living. While browsing through an attic with his elder brother, King uncovered a paperback version of an [H.P. Lovecraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H.P._Lovecraft) collection of short stories that had belonged to his father. The cover art—an illustration of a monster hiding within the recesses of a hell-like cavern beneath a tombstone—was, he writes,

“the moment of my life when the dowsing rod suddenly went down hard . . . as far as I was concerned, I was on my way.”

### [] Education and early creativity

King attended Durham Elementary School. He displayed an early interest in horror as an avid reader of [EC's horror comics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EC_Comics), including [*Tales from the Crypt*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tales_from_the_Crypt_%28comic%29) (he later paid tribute to the comics in his screenplay for [*Creepshow*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Creepshow)). He began writing for fun while still in school, contributing articles to *Dave's Rag*, the newspaper that his brother published with a [mimeograph machine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimeograph_machine), and later began selling stories to his friends which were based on movies he had seen (though when discovered by his teachers, he was forced to return the profits). The first of his stories to be independently published was "I Was a Teenage Grave Robber", serialized over three published and one unpublished issue of a fanzine, *Comics Review* in 1965. The story was republished in complete form as "In a Half-World of Terror" in another fanzine, *Stories of Suspense* ed by Marv Wolfman, the following year.[[5]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-4)

From 1966 King studied [English](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_language) at the [University of Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Maine), where he graduated in 1970 with a [Bachelor of Arts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bachelor_of_Arts) in English. He wrote a weekly column for the student newspaper, the *Maine Campus*, titled "King's Garbage Truck", took part in a writing workshop organized by [Burton Hatlen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Burton_Hatlen),[[1]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King" \l "cite_note-bn-0" \o ") and took odd jobs to pay for his studies, including one at an industrial laundry. He sold his first professional short story, "The Glass Floor", to *Startling Mystery Stories* in 1967 while attending the University of Maine.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-stephenking.com_bio-1) The [Fogler Library at UMaine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Maine#Academics_and_student_life) now holds King's papers.

After leaving the university King gained a certificate to teach high school but, being unable to find a teaching post immediately, initially supplemented his laboring wage by selling short stories to [men's magazines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_men%27s_magazines) such as *Playboy*. In 1971, King married [Tabitha Spruce](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabitha_King), a fellow student at the University of Maine, whom he had met at the Fogler Library. That fall King was hired as a teacher at [Hampden Academy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hampden_Academy) in [Hampden, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hampden,_Maine). He continued to contribute short stories to magazines and worked on ideas for novels.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-stephenking.com_bio-1) It was during this time that King developed a drinking problem, which stayed with him for more than a decade.

### [] Success with *Carrie*

On Mother's Day, 1973, King's novel [*Carrie*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrie_%28novel%29) was accepted by publishing house [Doubleday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doubleday_%28publisher%29). King has written how he became so discouraged when trying to develop the idea of a girl with [psychic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychic) powers into a novel that he threw an early draft in the trash, but his wife, Tabitha, rescued it and encouraged him to finish it.[[6]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-5) He received a $2,500 advance (not large for a novel, even at that time) but the paperback rights eventually earned $400,000, with half going to the publisher. King and his family relocated to Southern [Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maine) because of his mother's failing health. At this time he began writing a book titled *Second Coming*, later titled *Jerusalem's Lot*, before finally changing the title to [*'Salem's Lot*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%27Salem%27s_Lot) (published 1975). Soon after the release of [*Carrie*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carrie_%28novel%29) in 1974, his mother died of [lung cancer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lung_cancer). His Aunt Emrine read the novel to her before she died. King has written of his severe drinking problem at this time, stating that he was drunk while delivering the eulogy at his mother's funeral.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-KingOnWriting-3)

Despite the loss of his mother and his dependency problems, this was an exciting time for King. After his mother's death, King and his family moved to [Boulder, Colorado](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boulder,_Colorado), where King wrote [*The Shining*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shining_%28novel%29) (published 1977). The family returned to Western [Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maine) in 1975, where King completed his fourth novel, [*The Stand*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Stand) (published 1978). In 1977 the family traveled briefly to [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England), returning to [Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maine) that fall where King began teaching creative writing at the University of Maine. King has kept his primary residence in Maine ever since.

### [] Richard Bachman

*Main article:* [*Richard Bachman*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Bachman)

In the late 1970s-early 1980s, King published a handful of short novels—[*Rage*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rage_%28novel%29) (1977), [*The Long Walk*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Long_Walk) (1979), [*Road Work*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Road_Work) (1981), [*The Running Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Running_Man) (1982) and [*Thinner*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thinner_%28novel%29) (1984)—under the pseudonym Richard Bachman. The idea behind this was largely an experiment to measure for himself whether or not he could replicate his own success again, and allay at least part of the notion inside his own head that popularity might all be just an accident of fate. An alternate (or additional) explanation was because of publishing standards back then allowing only a single book a year.[[7]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-kingbachman-6)

The Bachman novels contained hints to the author's actual identity that were picked up on by fans, leading to King's admission of authorship in 1985. King dedicated his 1989 book [*The Dark Half*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Half) about a pseudonym turning on a writer to "the deceased Richard Bachman", and in 1996, when the Stephen King novel [*Desperation*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desperation) was released, the companion novel [*The Regulators*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Regulators) carried the Bachman byline.

In 2006, during a London UK press conference, King declared that he had discovered another Bachman novel, titled [*Blaze*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaze_%28novel%29). It was published on [June 12](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_12), [2007](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007) in the UK and US. In fact, the manuscript had been held at King's alma mater, the University of Maine in Orono for many years and had been covered by numerous King experts. King completely rewrote the 1973 manuscript for its publication.

### [] Confronting addiction

Shortly after [*The Tommyknockers*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Tommyknockers) publication in 1987, King's family and friends staged an intervention, dumping evidence of his addiction taken from the trash including beer cans, cigarette butts, grams of [cocaine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cocaine), [Xanax](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alprazolam), [Valium](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valium), [NyQuil](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/NyQuil), [dextromethorphan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dextromethorphan) (cough medicine), and [marijuana](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cannabis_%28drug%29), on the rug in front of him. As King related in his memoir, he then sought help and quit all forms of drugs and alcohol in the late 1980s, and has remained sober since.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-KingOnWriting-3)

### [] Car accident and thoughts of retirement

In the summer of 1999, King had finished the memoir section of [*On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Writing) but had abandoned the book for nearly eighteen months, unsure of how or whether to proceed.

On [June 19](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/June_19), at about 4:30 p.m., he was walking on the shoulder of Route 5 in Center Lovell, Maine. Driver [Bryan Smith](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bryan_Smith), distracted by an unrestrained dog moving in the back of his minivan,[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-7) struck King, who landed in a depression in the ground about 14 feet from the pavement of Route 5.[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-KingOnWriting-3) According to Oxford County Sheriff deputy Matt Baker, King was struck from behind and some witnesses said the driver was not speeding or reckless.[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-8) King's website, however, says King was walking facing traffic.

King was conscious enough to give the deputy phone numbers to contact his family but was in considerable pain. The author was first transported to Northern Cumberland Hospital in Bridgton and then flown by helicopter to Central Maine Hospital in [Lewiston](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lewiston,_Maine). His injuries—a collapsed right lung, multiple fractures of the right leg, scalp laceration and a broken hip—kept him in Central Maine Medical Center until [July 9](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/July_9), almost three weeks.

Earlier that year, King had finished most of [*From a Buick 8*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/From_a_Buick_8), a novel in which a character dies after getting struck by a car. Of the similarities, King says that he tries "not to make too much of it."

After five operations in ten days and [physical therapy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Physical_therapy), King resumed work on *On Writing* in July, though his hip was still shattered and he could only sit for about forty minutes before the pain became intolerable.

King's lawyer and two others purchased Smith's van for $1,500, reportedly to avoid it appearing on [eBay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EBay). The van was later crushed at a junkyard after King had severely beaten it with a baseball bat. King later mentioned during an interview with [*Fresh Air*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fresh_Air)*'*s [Terry Gross](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terry_Gross) that he wanted to completely destroy the vehicle himself with a sledgehammer.[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-9)

A fictionalized account of the accident was written into the [last novel](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Tower_%282004_novel%29) of the [Dark Tower](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Tower_%28series%29) series. Parts of the conversation between Smith and King, as he awaited medical attention, were used in the book, as well as an accurate description of the injuries sustained.

Two years later, King suffered severe pneumonia as a direct result of his lung being punctured in the accident. During this time Tabitha King was inspired to redesign his studio. Stephen visited the space while his books and belongings were packed away. What he saw was an image of what his studio would look like if he died, providing a seed for his novel [*Lisey's Story*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisey%27s_Story).

In 2002, King announced he would stop writing, apparently motivated in part by frustration with his injuries, which had made sitting uncomfortable and reduced his stamina. He has since resumed writing, but states on his website that:

"I'm writing but I'm writing at a much slower pace than previously and I think that if I come up with something really, really good, I would be perfectly willing to publish it because that still feels like the final act of the creative process, publishing it so people can read it and you can get feedback and people can talk about it with each other and with you, the writer, but the force of my invention has slowed down a lot over the years and that's as it should be."[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-10)

### [] Family life



King's home in Bangor

King owns two houses, one in [Bangor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangor,_Maine) and one in Center Lovell, while he and his wife regularly spend winter in their waterfront [mansion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mansion) located off the [Gulf of Mexico](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gulf_of_Mexico) in [Sarasota, Florida](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarasota,_Florida). He and Tabitha have three children and three grandchildren.[[2]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-stephenking.com_bio-1) [Tabitha King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabitha_King) has published nine of her own novels. Both King's sons are published authors: [Owen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owen_King) published his first collection of stories, *We're All in This Together: A Novella and Stories* in 2005; [Joseph Hillstrom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Hill_%28writer%29) published an award-winning collection of short stories, [*20th Century Ghosts*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/20th_Century_Ghosts), in 2005 and his first novel, [*Heart-Shaped Box*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heart-Shaped_Box_%28novel%29) will be adapted by [Irish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Irish_people) director [Neil Jordan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Neil_Jordan) for a 2008 [Warner Bros.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warner_Bros.) release. King's daughter Naomi spent two years as a [minister](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minister_%28Christianity%29) in the [Unitarian Universalist Church](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unitarian_Universalist_Church) in [Utica, New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Utica,_New_York), where she lived with her partner Rev Dr Thandeka. They now minister for the Unitarian Universalist Church of River of Grass in Plantation, South Florida. [[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-11)

### [] Recent activity

* In 2000, King published a serialized novel [*The Plant*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Plant) over the [Internet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Internet), bypassing print publication. At first it was thought that sales were unsuccessful and he abandoned the project, but King later revealed that he simply ran out of story.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-12)
* Since August of 2003, King has provided his take on pop culture in a column appearing on the back page of [*Entertainment Weekly*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainment_Weekly), usually every third week. The column is called "The Pop of King", a reference to "The King of Pop", [Michael Jackson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson). [[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-13)
* In October 2005, King signed a deal with [Marvel Comics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marvel_Comics), to publish a seven-issue, [miniseries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miniseries) [spin-off](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spin-off) of [*The Dark Tower series*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Tower_%28series%29) called [*The Gunslinger Born*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Dark_Tower:_The_Gunslinger_Born). The series, which focuses on a young [Roland Deschain](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roland_Deschain), is plotted by Robin Furth, dialogued by [Peter David](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_David), and illustrated by [Eisner Award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eisner_Award)-winning artist [Jae Lee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jae_Lee). The first issue was published on [February 7](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_7), [2007](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007), and because of its connection with King, David, Lee, and Marvel or-in-Chief [Joe Quesada](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Quesada) appeared at a midnight signing at a [Times Square](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Times_Square), [New York](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_York) comic book store to promote it.[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-14)[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-15) The work had sold over 200,000 copies by March 2007.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-16)
* On [February 14](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/February_14), [2007](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007), [Joblo.com](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joblo.com) announced[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-17) that plans were underway for [*Lost*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_%28TV_series%29) co-creator [J. J. Abrams](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._J._Abrams) to do an adaptation of King's epic *Dark Tower* series.
* In June 2007, King's novel [*Blaze*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blaze_%28novel%29), which was written in the early 1970s, under his long-time pseudonym [Richard Bachman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Bachman), was published. A novel, [*Duma Key*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Duma_Key) was published in January 2008; and King has written a musical play with [John Mellencamp](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Mellencamp) titled [*Ghost Brothers of Darkland County*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghost_Brothers_of_Darkland_County).
* On [April 20](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/April_20), [2007](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007), King commented on the [Virginia Tech massacre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Virginia_Tech_massacre) in [*Entertainment Weekly*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainment_Weekly).[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-18)
* On [August 15](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/August_15), [2007](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2007), King was mistaken for a vandal in an [Alice Springs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alice_Springs) bookstore. King was signing books authored by himself when a customer reported there was a vandal scribbling in volumes in the fiction section.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-19)
* King has voiced his support of Democratic presidential candidate [Barack Obama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barack_Obama).[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-20)
* A controversy emerged on [May 5](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/May_5), [2008](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2008), when a conservative blogger posted a clip of King at a [Library of Congress](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Library_of_Congress) reading event. King, talking to high-school students, had said: "If you can read, you can walk into a job later on. If you don't, then you've got the Army, Iraq, I don't know, something like that."[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-21) The comment was described by the blog as "another in a long line of liberal media members bashing the military," and likened to [John Kerry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Kerry)'s similar remark from 2006.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-22) King responded later that day, saying, "That a right-wing-blog would impugn my patriotism because I said children should learn to read, and could get better jobs by doing so, is beneath contempt...I live in a national guard town, and I support our troops, but I don’t support either the war or educational policies that limit the options of young men and women to any one career—military or otherwise."[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-23) King again defended his comment in an interview with the [*Bangor Daily News*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bangor_Daily_News) on May 8, saying, "I’m not going to apologize for promoting that kids get better education in high school, so they have more options. Those that don’t agree with what I’m saying, I’m not going to change their minds."[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-24)
* King is currently working on a new novel entitled [*Under the Dome*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Under_the_Dome), a reworking of an unfinished novel he tried writing twice in the 1980s, to be published in 2009 or 2010. [[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-25)

### [] Interests

#### [] Philanthropy

Since becoming commercially successful, King and his wife have donated money to causes around their home state of Maine.

The Kings' early nineties donation to the [University of Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Maine) Swim Team saved the program from elimination from the school's athletics department. Donations to local [YMCA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YMCA) and [YWCA](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/YWCA) programs have allowed renovations and improvements that would otherwise have been impossible. Additionally, King annually sponsors a number of scholarships for high school and college students.

The Kings do not desire recognition for their funding of Bangor-area facilities: they named the Shawn T. Mansfield Stadium for a prominent local little league coach's son who had cerebral palsy, while the Beth Pancoe Aquatic Park memorializes an accomplished area swimmer who died of cancer.

#### [] Baseball

Stephen King is a fan of the [Boston Red Sox](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boston_Red_Sox) and frequently attends home and away [baseball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baseball) games. He helped coach his son Owen's Bangor West team to the Maine [Little League](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Little_League) Championship in 1989. He recounts this experience in the [*New Yorker*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Yorker) essay "[Head Down](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Head_Down)," which also appears in the collection [*Nightmares and Dreamscapes*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nightmares_and_Dreamscapes). In 1999, King wrote [*The Girl Who Loved Tom Gordon*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Girl_Who_Loved_Tom_Gordon)*,* which featured former Red Sox [pitcher](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pitcher) [Tom Gordon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Gordon) as the protagonist's imaginary companion. King recently co-wrote a book titled [*Faithful: Two Diehard Boston Red Sox Fans Chronicle the Historic 2004 Season*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faithful:_Two_Diehard_Boston_Red_Sox_Fans_Chronicle_the_Historic_2004_Season) with [Stewart O'Nan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stewart_O%27Nan), recounting the authors' roller coaster reaction to the Red Sox's 2004 season, a season culminating in the Sox winning the [2004 American League Championship Series](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_American_League_Championship_Series) and [World Series](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2004_World_Series). In the 2005 film [*Fever Pitch*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fever_Pitch_%282005_film%29)*,* about an obsessive Boston Red Sox fan, King tosses out the first pitch of the Sox's opening day game. He also participates in neighborhood softball games around his Maine estate. He has also devoted one of his recent collumns for Entertainment Weekly on the subject of commercialism in Major League Baseball.

#### [] Radio stations

Stephen and his wife Tabitha own The Zone Corporation, a central [Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maine) radio station group consisting of WDME, [WZON](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WZON), and [WKIT](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/WKIT). The last of the three stations features a caricature of King as a [Frankenstein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frankenstein)-esque character as part of the logo and the tagline "Stephen King's Rock 'n' Roll Station."

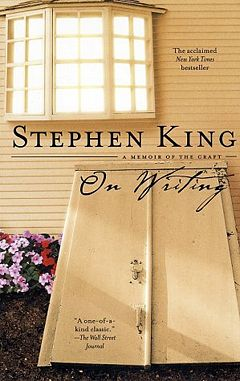
#### [] Society and politics

In April 2008, King spoke out against HB 1423, a bill pending in the Massachusetts state legislature that would restrict or ban the sale of violent video games to anyone under the age of 18. Although King stated that he had no personal interest in video games as a hobby, he criticized the proposed law, which he sees as an attempt by politicians to scapegoat pop culture, and to act as surrogate parents to others' children, which he asserted is usually "disastrous" and "undemocratic". He also saw the law as inconsistent, as it would forbid a 17-year-old, legally able to see [*Hostel: Part II*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hostel:_Part_II), from buying or renting [*Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grand_Theft_Auto:_San_Andreas), which is violent but less graphic. While conceding that he saw no artistic merit in some violent video games, King also opined that such games reflect the violence that already exists in society, which would not be lessened by such a law, which would be redundant in light of the ratings system that already exists for video games. King argued that such laws allow legislators to ignore the economic divide between the rich and poor, and the easy availability of guns, which he felt were the more legitimate causes of violence.[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-26)

## [] Work

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| * [Novels by Stephen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Novels_by_Stephen_King) * [Novels by Richard Bachman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Novels_by_Richard_Bachman) * [Short stories by Stephen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Short_stories_by_Stephen_King) * [Short story collections by Stephen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Short_story_collections_by_Stephen_King) | * [Short fiction by Stephen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_fiction_by_Stephen_King) * [Stephen King characters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Stephen_King_characters) * [The Dark Tower index](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:The_Dark_Tower) * [Complete bibliography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King_bibliography) (ordered chronologically) |

### [] Writing style



*On Writing*

In his nonfiction book [*On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Writing), King discusses his writing style at great length. King believes that, generally speaking, good stories cannot be called consciously and should not be plotted out beforehand; they are better served by focusing on a single "seed" of a story and letting the story grow itself. King often begins a story with no idea how it will end. He mentions in the *Dark Tower* series that halfway through its nearly 30-year writing period a terminally-ill woman asked how it would end, certain she would die before the series' completion. He told her he did not know. King believes strongly in this style, stating that his best writing comes from "freewriting." In *On Writing,* King stated that he believed stories to exist fully formed, like fossils, and that his role as a writer was to excavate the fossil as well as he could. When asked for the source of his story ideas in interviews, however, he has several times, including the appearance on Amazon.com's *Fishbowl,* answered, "I have the heart of a small boy……and I keep it in a jar on my desk." (This quote is most often attributed to Robert Bloch, author of [*Psycho*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psycho_%28novel%29)*.)*

He is known for his great eye for detail, for continuity and for inside references; many stories that may seem unrelated are often linked by secondary characters, fictional towns, or off-hand references to events in previous books. Many of the settings for King's books are in [Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maine), though often fictional locations, especially the town of Castle Rock. (Castle Rock was the setting for *The Body*; when the novella was adapted for the screen by [Rob Reiner](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rob_Reiner), Reiner formed a production company, [Castle Rock Entertainment](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_Rock_Entertainment), which has since gone on to produce other King adaptations including [*Dolores Claiborne*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolores_Claiborne_%28film%29), [*Hearts in Atlantis*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hearts_in_Atlantis_%28film%29), [*The Shawshank Redemption*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shawshank_Redemption) and [*The Green Mile*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Green_Mile_%28film%29).)

King's books are filled with references to American history and American culture, particularly the darker, more fearful side of these. These references are generally spun into the stories of characters, often explaining their fears. Recurrent references include crime, war (especially the [Vietnam War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vietnam_War)), violence, the supernatural and racism.

King is also known for his folksy, informal narration, often referring to his fans as "Constant Readers" or "friends and neighbors." This familiar style contrasts with the horrific content of many of his stories.

King has a very simple formula for learning to write well: "Read and write four to six hours a day. If you cannot find the time for that, you can't expect to become a good writer." He sets out each day with a quota of 2000 words and will not stop writing until it is met. He also has a simple definition for talent in writing: "If you wrote something for which someone sent you a check, if you cashed the check and it didn't bounce, and if you then paid the light bill with the money, I consider you talented."[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-27)

Shortly after his accident, King wrote the first draft of the book [*Dreamcatcher*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dreamcatcher_%28novel%29) with a notebook and a [Waterman](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waterman_pens) [fountain pen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fountain_pen), which he called "the world's finest word processor."[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-28)

King's writing style throughout his novels alternates from future to past, character development (including character illumination, dynamics and revelation), and setting in each chapter—leaving a cliffhanger at the end. He then continues this process until the novel is finished.

When asked why he writes, King responds: "The answer to that is fairly simple–there was nothing else I was made to do. I was made to write stories and I love to write stories. That's why I do it. I really can't imagine doing anything else and I can't imagine not doing what I do."[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-29)

King often uses authors as characters, or includes mention of [fictional books](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fictional_books) in his stories, novellas and novels, such as Paul Sheldon who is the main character in [*Misery*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Misery) and Jack Torrance in [*The Shining*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shining). See also [List of fictional books in the works of Stephen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_fictional_books_in_the_works_of_Stephen_King) for a complete list.

### [] Influences

King has called [Richard Matheson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Matheson) "the author who influenced me most as a writer."[[4]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-KingOnWriting-3) Both authors casually integrate characters' thoughts into the third person narration, just one of several parallels between their writing styles. In a current ion of Matheson's [*The Incredible Shrinking Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Incredible_Shrinking_Man), King is quoted: "A horror story if there ever was one…a great adventure story—it is certainly one of that select handful that I have given to people, envying them the experience of the first reading."

King is a fan of [H. P. Lovecraft](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._P._Lovecraft) and refers to him several times in [*Danse Macabre*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danse_Macabre_%28book%29). Lovecraft's influence shows in King's invention of bizarre, ancient deities, subtle connections among all of his tales and the integration of fabricated newspaper clippings, trial transcripts and documents as narrative devices. King's invented trio of afflicted New England towns—[Jerusalem's Lot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem%27s_Lot), [Castle Rock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_Rock_%28Stephen_King%29) and [Derry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derry_%28Stephen_King%29)—are reminiscent of Lovecraft's [Arkham](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arkham), [Dunwich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dunwich_%28H._P._Lovecraft%29) and [Innsmouth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Innsmouth). King's short story "[Crouch End](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crouch_End_%28Stephen_King%29)" is an explicit homage to, and part of, Lovecraft's [Cthulhu Mythos](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cthulhu_Mythos) story cycle. "[Gramma](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gramma" \o "Gramma)," a short story made into a film in the 1980s anthology horror show [*The New Twilight Zone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_New_Twilight_Zone), mentions Lovecraft's notorious fictional creation [*Necronomicon*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necronomicon), also borrowing the names of a number of the fictional monsters mentioned therein. "[I Know What You Need](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Know_What_You_Need)" from the 1976 collection [*Night Shift*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_Shift), and [*'Salem's Lot*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%27Salem%27s_Lot) also mention the tome. Another tribute to Lovecraft is in King's short story "[Jerusalem's Lot](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem%27s_Lot)," which opens *Night Shift*. King differs markedly from Lovecraft in his focus on extensive characterization and naturalistic dialogue, both notably absent in Lovecraft's writing. In [*On Writing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Writing), King is critical of Lovecraft's dialogue-writing skills, using passages from [*The Colour Out of Space*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Colour_Out_of_Space) as particularly poor examples. There are also several examples of King referring to [Lovecraftian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lovecraftian) characters in his work, such as [Nyarlathotep](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nyarlathotep) and [Yog-Sothoth](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yog-Sothoth).



[Alexandre Dumas, père](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandre_Dumas,_p%C3%A8re), an influence on King.

[Edgar Allan Poe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Allan_Poe) exerts a noticeable influence over King's writing as well. In [*The Shining*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shining_%28novel%29), the phrase "And the red death held sway over all" hearkens back to Poe's "And Darkness and Decay and the Red Death held illimitable dominion over all" from "[The Masque of the Red Death](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Masque_of_the_Red_Death)." The novella "[Dolan's Cadillac](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolan%27s_Cadillac)" has a theme almost identical to Poe's "[The Cask of Amontillado](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Cask_of_Amontillado)," including a paraphrase of Fortunato's famous plea, "For the love of God, Montresor!" In *The Shining*, King refers to Poe as "The Great American Hack".

King acknowledges the influence of [Bram Stoker](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bram_Stoker), particularly on his novel '*Salem's Lot*, which he envisioned as a retelling of [*Dracula*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dracula).[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-30) Its related short story "Jerusalem's Lot", is reminiscent of Stoker's [*The Lair of the White Worm*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lair_of_the_White_Worm).

King has also openly declared his admiration for another, less prolific author: [Shirley Jackson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shirley_Jackson). '*Salem's Lot* opens with a quotation from Jackson's [*The Haunting of Hill House*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Haunting_of_Hill_House). Tony, an imaginary playmate from *The Shining*, bears a striking resemblance to another imaginary playmate with the same name from Jackson's *Hangsaman*. A pivotal scene in [*Storm of the Century*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Storm_of_the_Century) is based on Jackson's [*The Lottery*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lottery). A character in [*Wolves of the Calla*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolves_of_the_Calla) references the Jackson book [*We Have Always Lived in the Castle*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_Have_Always_Lived_in_the_Castle).

King is a big fan of [John D. MacDonald](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_D._MacDonald) and dedicated the novella "Sun Dog" to MacDonald, saying "I miss you, old friend." For his part, MacDonald wrote an admiring preface to *Night Shift*, and even had his famous character, [Travis McGee](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Travis_McGee), reading *Cujo* in one of the last McGee novels.

In 1987 King's [Philtrum Press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philtrum_Press) published [Don Robertson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Robertson_%28author%29)'s novel, *The Ideal, Genuine Man*. In his forenote to the novel, King wrote, "Don Robertson was and is one of the three writers who influenced me as a young man who was trying to 'become' a novelist (the other two being Richard Matheson and John D. MacDonald)."[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-31)

In an [Amazon.com](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amazon.com) interview, King said the one book he wishes he'd written is [William Golding](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Golding)'s [*Lord of the Flies*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lord_of_the_Flies).

King makes references in several of his books to characters and events in [J. R. R. Tolkien](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._R._R._Tolkien)'s [*The Hobbit*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hobbit) and [*The Lord of the Rings*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings).

[Robert A. Heinlein](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Robert_A._Heinlein)'s book [*The Door into Summer*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Door_into_Summer) is repeatedly mentioned in King's [*Wolves of the Calla*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolves_of_the_Calla).

### [] Collaborations

King has written two novels with acclaimed horror novelist [Peter Straub](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Straub): [*The Talisman*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Talisman_%281983%29) and a sequel, [*Black House*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_House_%28novel%29). King has indicated that he and Straub will likely write the third and concluding book in this series, the tale of Jack Sawyer, but has set no time line for its completion.

King also wrote the nonfiction book, [*Faithful*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Faithful:_Two_Diehard_Boston_Red_Sox_Fans_Chronicle_the_Historic_2004_Season) with novelist and fellow Red Sox fanatic [Stewart O'Nan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stewart_O%27Nan).

In 1996 King collaborated with [Michael Jackson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michael_Jackson) to create [*Ghosts*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ghosts_%281997_film%29), a long and expensive musical video.

"Throttle", a novella written in collaboration with his son [Joe Hill](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Hill_%28writer%29), will be included in the anthology *He Is Legend: Celebrating Richard Matheson*, forthcoming from Gauntlet Press in February 2009.[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-32)

[*The Diary of Ellen Rimbauer: My Life at Rose Red*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Diary_of_Ellen_Rimbauer:_My_Life_at_Rose_Red), was a paperback tie-in for the King-penned miniseries [*Rose Red*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Red_%28film%29). The book was published under anonymous authorship, and written by Ridley Pearson. This spin-off is a rare occasion of another author being granted permission to write commercial work using characters and story elements invented by King.

Speculation that King wrote the novel [*Bad Twin*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_Twin), a tie-in to the series [*Lost*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lost_%28TV_series%29), under the [pseudonym](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pseudonym) [Gary Troup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gary_Troup_%28Lost%29) has been discred. This theory was fueled by King being an avid and self-declared Lost fan, having mentioned it and praised it several times in his Entertainment Weekly articles.

King played guitar for the rock band [Rock Bottom Remainders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_Bottom_Remainders), several of whose members are authors. Other members include [Dave Barry](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Barry), [Ridley Pearson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ridley_Pearson), [Scott Turow](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scott_Turow), [Amy Tan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_Tan), [James McBride](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/James_McBride_%28musician%29), [Mitch Albom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitch_Albom), [Roy Blount Jr.](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Blount_Jr.), [Matt Groening](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matt_Groening), Kathi Kamen Goldmark and [Greg Iles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greg_Iles). None of them claim to have any musical talent. King is a fan of the rock band [AC/DC](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AC/DC), who did the soundtrack for his 1986 film, [*Maximum Overdrive*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maximum_Overdrive). He is also a fan of [The Ramones](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Ramones), who wrote the title song for [*Pet Sematary*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pet_Sematary_%28film%29) and appeared in the music video. They are referred to several times in various novels and stories. In addition he wrote the liner notes for their tribute album [*We're a Happy Family*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We%27re_a_Happy_Family)*.* They, in return, name checked him on the song "It's Not My Place (In the 9 to 5 World)", which is on 1981's [*Pleasant Dreams*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pleasant_Dreams).[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-33) In 1988, the band [Blue Öyster Cult](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blue_%C3%96yster_Cult) recorded an updated version of their 1974 song ["Astronomy"](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Astronomy_%28song%29). The single released for radio play featured a narrative intro spoken by King.[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-BOC-34)

### [] Films and TV

*Main article:* [*Media based on Stephen King works*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_based_on_Stephen_King_works)

Many of King's novels and short stories have been made into major motion pictures or TV movies and miniseries.[[36]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-IMDb-35) Unlike some authors, King is untroubled by movies based on his works differing from the original work. He has contrasted his books and its film adaptations as "[apples and oranges](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apples_and_oranges); both delicious, but very different." The exception to this is [*The Shining*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shining_%28film%29), which King criticized when it was released in 1980; and [*The Lawnmower Man*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Lawnmower_Man_%281992_film%29) (he sued to have his name removed from the crs). King seems to have gained greater appreciation for Kubrick's *The Shining* over the years. Kubrick had described the original novel in an interview as not "literary," having its merits exclusively in the plot. This understandably may have upset King. As a film, *The Lawnmower Man* bore no resemblance whatsoever to King's original short story. King's name was used solely as a faux-[brand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brand).

King's first film appearance was in George Romero's "Knightriders" as a buffoonish audience member. His first featured role was in *Creepshow*, playing Jordy Verrill, a backwoods redneck who, after touching a fallen meteor in hopes of selling it, grows moss all over his body. He has since made cameos in several adaptations of his works. He appeared in [*Pet Sematary*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pet_Sematary) as a minister at a funeral, in [*Rose Red*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rose_Red_%28film%29) as a pizza deliveryman, in [*The Stand*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Stand_%28TV_miniseries%29) as "Teddy Wieszack," in the [*Shining*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Shining_%28TV_miniseries%29) miniseries as band member Gage Creed and in [*The Langoliers*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Langoliers) as Tom Holby. He has also appeared in *The Golden Years*, in [Chappelle's Show](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chappelle%27s_Show) and, along with fellow author [Amy Tan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amy_Tan), on [*The Simpsons*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insane_Clown_Poppy) as himself. In addition to acting, King tried his hand at directing with [*Maximum Overdrive*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maximum_Overdrive), in which he also made a cameo appearance as a man using an ATM that is on the fritz.

King produced and acted in a miniseries, [*Kingdom Hospital*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kingdom_Hospital), which is based on the Danish miniseries [*Riget*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Riget) by [Lars von Trier](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lars_von_Trier). He also co-wrote The [*X-Files*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/X-Files) season 5 episode "[Chinga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chinga" \o "Chinga)" with the creator of the series [Chris Carter](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Carter_%28screenwriter%29).

King is friends with [film director](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Film_director) [George Romero](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Romero), to whom he partly dedicated his book [*Cell*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cell_%28novel%29), and wrote a tribute about the filmmaker in [*Entertainment Weekly*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Entertainment_Weekly) for his [pop culture](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pop_culture) column, as well as an essay for the Elite [DVD](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DVD) version of [*Night of the Living Dead*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_of_the_Living_Dead).

King has also made an appearance as a contestant on Celebrity [*Jeopardy!*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeopardy%21) in 1995.

## [] Reception

### [] Critical response

Critical responses to King's works have been mixed.

In his analysis of post-[World War II](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_War_II) horror fiction, *The Modern Weird Tale* (2001), critic [S. T. Joshi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/S._T._Joshi)[[37]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-36) devotes a chapter to King's work. Joshi argues that King's best-known works (his supernatural novels), are his worst, describing them as mostly bloated, illogical, maudlin and prone to [*deus ex machina*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deus_ex_machina) endings. Despite these criticisms, Joshi argues that since [*Gerald's Game*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gerald%27s_Game) (1993), King has been tempering the worst of his writing faults, producing books that are leaner, more believable and generally better written. Joshi also stresses that, despite his flaws, King almost unfailingly writes insightfully about the pains and joys of [adolescence](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adolescence), and has produced a few outstanding books and stories. Joshi cites two early non-supernatural novels -– *Rage* (1977) and *The Running Man* (1982) -– as King's best, suggesting both are riveting and well-constructed [suspense thrillers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Suspense_thriller), with believable characters.

In 1996, King won an [O. Henry Award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O._Henry_Award) for his short story "[The Man in the Black Suit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Man_in_the_Black_Suit)."

In 2003, King was honored by the [National Book Awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Book_Awards) with a lifetime achievement award, the Medal of Distinguished Contribution to American Letters, with his work being described thus:

Stephen King’s writing is securely rooted in the great American tradition that glorifies spirit-of-place and the abiding power of narrative. He crafts stylish, mind-bending page-turners that contain profound moral truths–some beautiful, some harrowing–about our inner lives. This Award commemorates Mr. King’s well-earned place of distinction in the wide world of readers and book lovers of all ages.

Some in the literary community expressed disapproval of the award: Richard Snyder, the former CEO of Simon & Schuster, described King's work as "non-[literature](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literature)", and critic [Harold Bloom](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harold_Bloom) denounced the choice:

The decision to give the National Book Foundation's annual award for "distinguished contribution" to Stephen King is extraordinary, another low in the shocking process of dumbing down our cultural life. I've described King in the past as a writer of [penny dreadfuls](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dime_novel), but perhaps even that is too kind. He shares nothing with [Edgar Allan Poe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edgar_Allan_Poe). What he is is an immensely inadequate writer on a sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph, book-by-book basis.[[38]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-37)

However, others came to King's defense, such as writer [Orson Scott Card](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orson_Scott_Card), who responded:

Let me assure you that King's work most definitely is literature, because it was written to be published and is read with admiration. What Snyder really means is that it is not the literature preferred by the academic-literary elite."[[39]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-38)

In [Roger Ebert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roger_Ebert)'s review of the 2004 movie [*Secret Window*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Secret_Window), he states "A lot of people were outraged that [King] was honored at the National Book Awards, as if a popular writer could not be taken seriously. But after finding that his book [*On Writing*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/On_Writing) had more useful and observant things to say about the craft than any book since Strunk and White's [*The Elements of Style*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Elements_of_Style), I have gotten over my own snobbery."[[40]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-39)

### [] Influence on popular culture

Since the publication of *Carrie*, public awareness of King and his works has reached a high saturation rate,[[41]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-40) becoming as popular as [*The Twilight Zone*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Twilight_Zone_%281959_TV_series%29) or the films of [Alfred Hitchcock](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfred_Hitchcock)[[42]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-41). As the best-selling novelist in the world, and the most financially successful horror writer in history, King is an American horror icon of the highest order. King's books and characters encompass primary fears in such an iconic manner that his stories have become synonymous with certain key genre ideas.

### [] Awards

King has won 6 [Bram Stoker awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bram_Stoker_Award), 6 [Horror Guild awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_Horror_Guild_Award), 5 [Locus Awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Locus_Award), 3 [World Fantasy Awards](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Fantasy_Awards) (including a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2004), the 1996 [O. Henry award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/O_Henry_Award), a [Hugo Award](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugo_Award) in 1982 for the non-fiction [Danse Macabre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Danse_Macabre_%28book%29). He was given a Lifetime Achievement Award in 2003 by the [Horror Writers' Association](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horror_Writers_Association) and, controversially, a Medal for [Distinguished Contribution to American Letters](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distinguished_Contribution_to_American_Letters) from the [National Book Foundation](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Book_Foundation) in 2003 (see Critical Response, above).[[43]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stephen_King#cite_note-42) In 2007, King received an award for lifetime achievement from the Canadian Literary Guild, the only non-Canadian to be bestowed this award.

## [] See also

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| --- | --- |
| [] Family  * [Tabitha King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tabitha_King) * [Owen King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Owen_King) * [Joseph Hillstrom King](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joe_Hill_%28writer%29) * Naomi King  [] Projects  * [Dollar Baby](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dollar_Baby) * [Rock Bottom Remainders](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rock_Bottom_Remainders) | [] Publishers  * [Doubleday](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Doubleday_%28publisher%29) * [Philtrum Press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philtrum_Press) * [Charles Scribner's Sons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Scribner%27s_Sons) * [Viking Press](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viking_Press) * [Grant](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grant) * [Cemetery Dance Publications](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cemetery_Dance_Publications)  [] King's fictional topography  * [Castle Rock, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Castle_Rock_%28Stephen_King%29) * [Derry, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Derry_%28Stephen_King%29) * [Jerusalem's Lot, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerusalem%27s_Lot_%28Stephen_King%29) * [Haven, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Haven_%28Stephen_King%29&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Sidewinder, Colorado](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Sidewinder_%28Stephen_King%29&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Duma Key, FL](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Duma_Key_%28Stephen_King%29&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Dark Score Lake, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Dark_Score_Lake_%28Stephen_King%29&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Little Tall Island, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Little_Tall_Island_%28Stephen_King%29&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Lake Kashwakamak, Maine](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Lake_Kashwakamak_%28Stephen_King%29&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Arnette, Texas](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Arnette_%28Stephen_King%29&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Gatlin, Nebraska](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Gatlin,_Nebraska&action=edit&redlink=1) * [Jonah, Oklahoma](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Jonah,_Oklahoma&action=edit&redlink=1) |

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*See also* [*Books about Stephen King*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Books_about_Stephen_King)

## External links

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* [Stephen & Tabitha King Foundation](http://www.stkfoundation.org/)
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