

Lisa Chang: Public health by day, novelist and letterer by night

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"Murder by the Script" is the fourth book Lisa Chang has co-written with her husband.

One of the realities for students at the [Tulane School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine](#) is that beginning a journey in public health does not lock a person into a static, narrow career path.

Lisa Chang is a living, breathing example of this.

By day, Chang, who graduated with a PhD in public health education and promotion, is the Hepatitis Surveillance Supervisor for the Louisiana Department of Health's STD/HIV/Hepatitis Program.

That's compelling work on its own. But after hours, Chang also operates a top-shelf lettering business in addition to co-writing mystery novels.

Her fourth book, co-written with her husband Seth Pevey under her pen name Lisa Pevey, "Murder by the Script" [debuted in February](#). It continues the bayou-set adventures of the lettering detective, Mila Breaux, and her murder sleuthing hijinks.

So, how did Chang go from traditional public health work to writing cozy Louisiana-themed mysteries?

Gradually.

Chang began dabbling in lettering while she was preparing to write her dissertation at Tulane. She had noticed that lettering on Instagram had started to take off, and wanting to engage in an activity that could keep her busy, she took an interest in brush calligraphy, which led to a wide variety of lettering styles.

She spent a few years working on her lettering and growing her Instagram account, [@nolalettering](#), which today has over 65,000 followers.



Lettering art from Lisa Chang's Instagram.

“There weren’t as many folks doing and teaching lettering then, so I think that’s what allowed my account to grow at a decent pace,” Chang said. “Also, I was focused on sarcastic quotes instead of positive, motivational ones that were everywhere back then. I got some paid/sponsored opportunities from it and also created a lettering course with a fellow hand letterer. It was all great fun.”

Eventually, Chang decided she wanted to mix things up and take on different challenges. That led to her teaching herself to illustrate - a transition she noted was

easier due to the skills she gained through lettering – but she also became inspired by cozy mysteries, a sub-genre she instantly gravitated toward after discovering it.

“Seth attended a self-publishing writers conference in 2022 where he learned even more about self-publishing along with the cozy mystery genre and proceeded to get me hooked on it. We decided some time after the conference that we wanted to try writing a series in that genre.”

Pevey, a Louisiana native and 2007 Tulane English grad, brought a knowledge of the local setting to the mix, while Chang was able to mold her lead character through her knowledge of lettering and illustration.

“And that’s how ‘The Lettering Detective’ series was born,” she says.

Chang uses her writing and lettering pursuits as a creative outlet, helping her escape and unwind from her more numbers-related day job. However, she does see some overlap when it comes to data management and analysis.

“The data-related education I’ve done through Tulane and in my hepatitis role has made me more aware of the importance of data in my lettering/authoring side-hustles,” Chang said. “In both the public health world and the self-publishing world, finding and targeting your audience/community is very important for success. For example, being able to see the demographic breakdown of our audience can help us target our ads better.

“Thanks data!” she adds.