

# James Ellroy

## Quotes

*Book, Writing, Thinking, People, Mother, World, Years, Kids, Home, Self,  
Giving, Want, Wanted, Careers, Father, Moving, Past, Morning, House,  
Character*

Anybody who doesn't know that politics is crime has got a few screws loose.

~James Ellroy

I would like to provoke ambiguous responses in my readers.

~James Ellroy

Tell me anything. Tell me everything. Revoke our time apart. Love me fierce in danger.

~James Ellroy

L.A.: Come on vacation, go home on probation.

~James Ellroy

I am a writer. I could not afford to take 15 months off from my writing career to play detective.

~James Ellroy

Cats gotta scratch. Dogs gotta bite. I gotta write.

~James Ellroy

I've been tremendously moved by a bunch of odd books. Ross McDonald is very important to me. I love the Lew Archer books.

~James Ellroy

Some men get the world, some men get ex-hookers and a trip to Arizona. You're in with the former, but my God I don't envy the blood on your conscience.

~James Ellroy

I love thinking about American history, thinking about LA history. I love brooding on crime.

~James Ellroy

I learn things late-and only the hard way.

~James Ellroy

Our shared world is humanly unquantifiable and ideologically confused. Which one of them is capable of implementing the most recognizable harm or good?

~James Ellroy

To me, there's nothing on earth other than women. It's why I get out of bed every morning.

~James Ellroy

Some people don't respond to civility.

~James Ellroy

I don't know anybody in the underworld. I make this stuff up. I don't know any criminals.

~James Ellroy

I begin by assembling notes on characters. Large swaths of the plot become clear to me as I do this.

~James Ellroy

I'm getting a wider circle of fans now. More women, more middle class people.

~James Ellroy

I like to be alone so I can write. But focus can hurt you. I don't want to be some stress casualty in early middle age.

~James Ellroy

I'm not interested in popular culture. I hate Quentin Tarantino. I rarely go to movies. I hate rock 'n' roll. I work. I think. I listen to classical music. I brood. I like sports cars.

~James Ellroy

As a kid, I sensed history going on all around me, but the basic thrust of it didn't move me.

~James Ellroy

It was easy not to think of my future; I didn't have one.

~James Ellroy

The 1950s to me is darkness, hidden history, perversion behind most doors waiting to creep out. The 1950s to most people is kitsch and Mickey Mouse watches and all this intolerable stuff.

~James Ellroy

Noir is dead for me because historically, I think it's a simple view. I've taken it as far as it can go. I think I've expanded on it a great deal, taken it further than any other American novelist.

~James Ellroy

Every one of my books is written from the viewpoint of cops, with the exception of my book *Killer on the Road*, which is written from the viewpoint of a serial killer.

~James Ellroy

As critical acclaim and response has built up, every interview I give is a chance to puncture the myth I've created about my work and refine it.

~James Ellroy

I think I'm out of crime fiction now, and I think the dividing line is *American Tabloid*.

~James Ellroy

Raymond Chandler once wrote that Dashiell Hammett gave murder back to the people who really committed it.

~James Ellroy

I'm trying to be less bombastic. I love my books. I think I've done things nobody else has done.

~James Ellroy

I don't have children. I serve the world and I serve God by living as deep within my work as I can, reveling in the language of other times and putting it forth for the world.

~James Ellroy

I don't feel in any way obligated to remain current with the culture. I feel no social obligation whatsoever. I trust my morality in the narrow path I trek through the world as I work.

~James Ellroy

I wanted to portray a newly democratized, enclosed society. I wanted to show how extraordinarily fluid people are in their embrace of other human beings.

~James Ellroy

And you love to read, you love to escape, right?

~James Ellroy

Closure is a preposterous concept worthy of the worst aspects of American daytime TV.

~James Ellroy

Dead people belong to the live people who claim them most obsessively.

~James Ellroy

There's none with me, although you've seen me before - I'm outrageous.

~James Ellroy

I like to have fun out there. I work hard, and then I get to cut loose and go out and tour, and I enjoy it. I like to go out and meet the people. I love to sell books.

~James Ellroy

I got a woman I'm loyal to above all things, above my career. She's profound to me. I'm quiet. I live in Kansas City. I work.

~James Ellroy

I was a WASP kid going to a high school that was 99 percent Jewish and I wanted attention and I wanted to make a spectacle of myself because I couldn't stand to be ignored.

~James Ellroy

Rock and rollers can get you the youth buzz, and younger people are fanatical readers.

~James Ellroy

I am a master of fiction. I am also the greatest crime novelist who ever lived. I am to the crime novel in specific what Tolstoy is to the Russian novel and what Beethoven is to music.

~James Ellroy

All I want to do is make serious movies that explore social issues and turn a profit, and slip the schnitzel to Jane DePugh.

~James Ellroy

The truth of the matter is, you lose a parent to murder when you're 10 years old, and in fact at the time of the murder you hate your lost parent, my mother in my case.

~James Ellroy

Joe Wambaugh's a friend. I know him only casually, but I like him a lot. I think he likes my books.

~James Ellroy

I've created a narrative of the world. I live in the world - tenuously, most times. I've avoided the digital world.

~James Ellroy

I don't think I came out of anybody. I think I developed out of the influences I described in *My Dark Places*. American history, L.A. of the 1950s. I'm comfortable with that.

~James Ellroy

[Raymond] Chandler, I reread him, and there's a lot of bad writing there. I don't think he knew much about people.

~James Ellroy

I wanted things. Whatever it cost and whatever it took, I would do it. And that's it.

~James Ellroy

How did I change my life? I wanted things. I wanted women and I wanted to write books.

~James Ellroy

I almost had an intransigent mental spirit. I always wanted things.

~James Ellroy

I'm grateful for the life I have. I lived bad for many years, and I've got a great life now. I've got the kind of life people only dream about.

~James Ellroy

It's all sex for me. Politics is sex. Race is sex. It's the novel. It's the novel!

~James Ellroy

You get up in the morning because you might meet a woman. And if you stay at home by yourself, alone, you will not meet a woman.

~James Ellroy

I don't want to recover from writing this book [The Onion]. I feel very poised. I feel like I'm with my mother for the first time ever. I feel like I've confronted her, and the confrontation goes on.

~James Ellroy

Sometimes I'll leave the house and go to a delicatessen down the street from me - it's been there a million years - just because I can look at people.

~James Ellroy

We do. Or re-create the ones we have, and project. My whole life is projection.

~James Ellroy

I don't think I will write anything that could be even remotely considered a genre novel from this point on. I think I've graduated.

~James Ellroy

If I wanted to make money I would have written another novel.

~James Ellroy

Classical music fulfills for me the function of narrative. I spend 90 minutes a day listening to symphonic music - Beethoven to Bartók - some chamber pieces, and that's my enrichment.

~James Ellroy

I needed to address that I've had some profound moral shifts in my own life.



~James Ellroy

I drank, I used drugs, I broke into houses, sniffed women's undergarments. I ate Benzedrex inhalers, jacked off for 18 hours at a pop, lived with my dad in a shitpad.

~James Ellroy

For a much lauded writer, I'm not terribly self-absorbed. In social situations, which are difficult for me - I mean, this is an interview - I'm normally uncomfortable talking about myself.

~James Ellroy

I think the great unspoken theme in noir fiction is male self-pity. It pervades noir movies.

~James Ellroy

"War gives men a plain-and-simple something to do ... Women write diaries in the hope that their words will beckon fate." It's a romantic manifesto.

~James Ellroy

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