

Sam Penny
205 Rainbow Drive #10503
Livingston, TX 77399
Cellphone: 512/555-5555
Email: sam@twopennytravels.com

February 5, 2003

Jodie Rhodes Literary Agency
8840 Villa La Jolla Drive, Ste. 315
La Jolla, CA 92037

Dear Ms. Rhodes,

We met at the Southern California Writer's Conference in Oxnard last fall. Thank you so much for the excellent information you provided in your session and at the Panel Discussion. You helped me establish the bar by which I can now measure the quality of an agent. I am submitting my work for your review and wish to discuss if you would represent me to the publishing world.

What will happen when, not if, a great earthquake strikes on the New Madrid Seismic Zone? *Memphis 7.9*, a novel of 360 pages, brings together a cast of characters who wrestle with that problem until a warm morning in May when the catastrophe happens. The first half of the story describes how people predict and prepare for such an event. The second details the actual earthquake and the first hours following, telling how the earth fractures, how different character's lives end or take new paths, how the land and people of Memphis change, and how the United States will never be the same.

Since retirement I have drawn from my background of research and engineering the information needed to explain in detail how a major earthquake happens. I am now satisfied with the result and seek an appropriate agent to present my work to the publishing community.

I am writing a set of companion/sequel books in the *Memphis 7.9* series telling of the effects of the earthquake on the Mississippi River, the escape of refugees from Memphis, and conflict for rights to the prediction methods. My writing credits include a column on RV-related Internet sites for RV Companion Magazine for the last three years, webmaster for two websites: www.twopennytravels.com and www.jojobahills.com, and numerous past technical articles.

Enclosed for your consideration are a synopsis and the first three chapters of *Memphis 7.9*. A SASE is also enclosed for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Sam Penny

Synopsis: Memphis 7.9

What will happen when a great earthquake strikes on the New Madrid Fault Zone? The disaster that seismologists predict near Memphis and along the Mississippi River changes everything, including people.

Precursor earthquakes in Arkansas and California set the stage for impending disaster as Tom and Judy Fox drive their camper from California to Memphis to visit their daughter, Jenny.

Jenny's love interest, Memphis University student Chris Nelson, uses the latest shaker on the New Madrid to predict another temblor centered at the Arkansas-Missouri border. He watches his prediction become more and more dire as other small fractures wrack the fault.

JQ McCrombie feels the shaking but continues to cut corners in his earthquake safety retrofit business as his computer administrator, Alex Smyth, uncovers the full extent of JQ's chicanery.

The Mayor of Memphis and Marion Roberts, Director of Seismic Safety, strive to convince the populace of the city to prepare.

Chris Nelson is right. Just as the Foxes reach Memphis a magnitude 7.9 earthquake rips the fault apart. The earthwaves spread, reaping havoc across the central and eastern United States. Buildings crumble, levees break, bridges and overpasses fall, refineries explode. The locks at Kentucky Dam give way, adding a flood from the Ohio to the already swollen Mississippi River whose confining banks have turned to mud.

Man-made structures along the Mississippi from New Orleans to St. Louis, up the Ohio to Cincinnati, and between Arkansas and Tennessee are totally destroyed. Hundreds of miles from the epicenter, in Chicago, Atlanta, Kansas City, and Nashville, fallen structures and floods add to the death toll and injuries.

The story of Memphis 7.9 continues with the first few hours after the big event as seen through the eyes of the Foxes, TV news, the President, and others near Memphis. People cope in the best ways they can. Some live, some die. Some grow as others shrivel. All are changed by the worst disaster to ever strike the United States of America.

I received this response from Jodie.

From: [Jodie Rhodes](#)

To: sam@twopennytravels.com

Sent: Sunday, February 09, 2003 10:15 AM

Subject: query

Thank you for thinking of our agency. Unfortunately, we do not feel we'd be successful in marketing your book. Please bear in mind that a certain amount of subjectivity plays a part in this decision. Other agents may well feel completely different.

Good luck to you.

Best regards,

Jodie Rhodes

JODIE RHODES LITERARY AGENCY