



## 2025 IHSA JOURNALISM STATE FINALS: **FEATURE WRITING**

### **DIRECTIONS & RULES**

You are a staff member of Abraham High School's *The Standard* (Middleland, Ill.).

J.D. Olivia, an author who lives in Northern Illinois, recently did a Zoom chat with AHS journalism students to talk about his experiences as a writer.

*The Standard's* editor was in that class and thought that J.D.'s writing career would make for an interesting topic for a feature story in the paper. He has provided you with a recording of an interview he conducted with J.D. to pull quotes and additional information from.

Use only the information provided in the interview and background information in the prompt below to write your story. Do not seek out additional information on the internet or elsewhere.

The story word limit will be 500 words. In addition to a well-written and organized article, judges will look for the use of an interesting lead, accurate details about the information provided by the subject, and proper style and mechanics. Students are permitted to use an AP Stylebook and dictionaries (non-electronic format only). At the top of your document, type "School Code: ####" with your individualized code numbers. Type the final word count at the bottom of the story before turning it in.

Start Time: 11:30 AM

Work must be submitted to Google Drive by: 1:00 PM



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### VIDEO INTERVIEW

The interview video will be played once for the group. If you need to review further, it can be accessed at: [www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series](http://www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series)

Or viewed directly at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3xyN22cK9p0>

1Q) (0:09) Tell us about your background and upbringing, and how that led you to become a writer?

2Q) (2:56) What was the first book that you published? When did that occur and what was the publishing process like?

3Q) (4:13) When and where do you write, and how long does it take for you to typically write a book from start to finish?

4Q) (5:40) Are you constantly writing new books or do you set a goal to write a book in a particular year?

5Q) (7:09) Your writing themes range from supernatural to post-apocalyptic to crime. Do you purposely seek out new genres or just write what you feel?

6Q) (8:25) The Books of Jericho and Wolf Stone Saga are both multi-book series. Was that the idea from the start, or did you write the first book and felt like there was more stories to tell with these characters and concepts?

7Q) (10:29) Do you have a specific goal when you start to write a new book?

8Q) (11:44) If you were going to recommend one book you have written to someone who has never read you before, which would it be and why?



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### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

*From Amazon.com*

An author, comic writer, filmmaker, podcaster, and wrestler, J.D. Oliva wears a lot of hats. His books include Hawk Hallow, Harvest Moon and the supernatural thriller series, The Books of Jericho. His comics, including Delgue, Red Sunrise and Shunned have won multiple awards. A co-host of the Superhero Speak podcast series, he's also writes about professional wrestling in his free time.

J.D. lives with his wife and son in DeKalb, Illinois where he runs the Video Infinity production company, while also teaching and coaching wrestling at DeKalb High School in DeKalb, Illinois.

He has published 14 books:

#### **(14) Gaijin: An International Thriller Kindle Edition (Published February 25, 2005)**

Synopsis: Pro wrestler Matt Bradley (aka Black Phoenix) uses his day job as a cover to smuggle drugs into Japan, where he has a run-in with The Yakuza.

#### **Talisman: The Wolf Stone Saga (Published March 1, 2023)**

(11) Volume 1: Immortal

(12) Volume 2: Golem

(13) Volume 3: Black Dog

Synopsis: Jennifer Greywolf inherits mystical powers after receiving her father's mysterious talisman following the death of her mother. Over the course of series, she is hunted by the government, her father's enemies, and other supernatural creatures. She seeks to learn more about herself and her family's mysterious origins while trying to survive.

#### **(10) Red Sunrise: A Samurai Vampire Thriller Paperback (Published June 16, 2022)**

Synopsis: Samurais vs. vampires!



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### **(7) Apex: An Urban Fantasy (Published July 1, 2020)**

Attacked by her dad's old enemy and captured by the US military, a young heroine must team up with the god-like sentinel to escape. Can one young woman rise to defend the planet?

### **The Books of Jericho: A Collection of Supernatural Thrillers**

(2) Volume 1: Harvest Moon (Published September 10, 2019)

(3) Volume 2: The Devil's Prayer (Published November 12, 2019)

(4) Volume 3: Nightcrawler (Published November 26, 2019)

(5) Volume 4: Snowblind (Published December 10, 2019)

(6) Book of Jericho Prequel (Published February 25, 2020)

(8) Volume 5: Sundown (Published September 26, 2021)

(9) Volume 6: The Book of Warlock (Published October 9, 2021)

Synopsis: "What if Jack Reacher worked the X-Files?" Ethan Jericho is the code name of a mysterious international assassin whose work takes him into the darkest corners of Earth. When things go bump in the night, Ethan Jericho bumps back!

### **(1) Hawk Hallow (Published January 21, 2018)**

Synopsis: Cody Burk's family is forced to sell their famed haunted house following the death of his father. He soon discovers that the new buyers have added some murderous modifications and works to stop them.



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### **SUBMITTING WORK**

1. Upon completing your work, be sure your four-digit school code is at the top of the document and your word count at the bottom of the story. Be sure your name or school name do not appear in the document or file name.
2. Turn your work into a PDF (File > Save as > Save as Type) and name the file as follows:

**Four Digit School Code – Event Name**

So your file name should look like this...

**1234 – Feature Writing.pdf**

3. Go to [www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series](http://www.ihsa.org/Journalism-State-Series)
4. Find your event and click the “Submit Work” link that applies to it.
5. Select the PDF of your work to upload. In the First Name box, type your four-digit school code. In the Last Name box, re-type your four-digit school to confirm.
6. Once you are prompted that your document as uploaded successfully, please log out if you are using a Heartland Computer.