

# WRITER'S DIGEST

SELF-PUBLISHED

**BOOK  
AWARDS**



December 15, 2020

**Entry Title:** *HomoAmerican - The Secret Society*

**Author:** Michael Dane

**Judge Number:** 34

**Entry Category:** Life Stories

<b>Structure, Organization, and Pacing:</b>	5
<b>Spelling, Punctuation, and Grammar:</b>	5
<b>Production Quality and Cover Design:</b>	5
<b>Plot and Story Appeal:</b>	5
<b>Character Appeal and Development:</b>	5
<b>Voice and Writing Style:</b>	5

## **Judge's Commentary:**

Great cover design with the black and gold, dividing the image field into thirds, and the intrigue of his case for the symbolism it surely shall reveal. Cover design creates great interest in stepping into this life story. Well done. There is a pulse running through this book, an energy that at first beckons the reader, intrigues and scares, upsets and pushes at buttons. I'm fascinated by how this pulse is very much like an additional central character. Very well done. Author crafts settings masterfully, such as the fire lighting up the city, "the cement cracked and the beams twisted down into the water." The story delivers movie-worthy images. Well done. I love the author's tone throughout, a quiet power and resignation as our guide. Dialogue stands out in well-differentiated voices, with accents, and the author's terrific instinct to vary sentence structure for a more natural flow that carries the narrative along. Nice work. We never get any jumpy dialogue, and author imbues dialogue scenes with movement, sensory details, physical contact, inner dialogue ... just a wealth of realism. The choice to do dialogue in bold created a moment of visual adjustment that distracted at first, but then melted into acceptance. Throughout, the intrigue grows with the subtlest of narrative direction, and author uses supporting characters well to add era and flavor to the setting. Nice. Much of the book centers around feelings, such as "I spend much of my life ...living in a world of half dread and half anticipation," and I commend the author for enticing phrasing and unique descriptions. Well done. "Half dread and half anticipation" is just one example of fascinating emotion blends that the reader can assess. We exist in different worlds, in the company of fascinating men and women, and simmering beneath is that pulse. Excellent work. Structured so well, the intricacies of the outlining look effortless. Author has crafted multiple streams of realistic voice, logical plot movement and mood. Well done.