THE STRONGHOLD SERIES

NEWS, NOTES & NUGGETS

AUGUST 2026

Fiction With Purpose

You are receiving this newsletter because you have shown interest in or have at least one copy of a book in The Stronghold Series.

Welcome — and THANK YOU for being a part of our family.



SECTIONS

- *FROM ME TO YOU* ..... *My 1st podcast experience*
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- *BEYOND THE PAGE* ..... *We're filming and need extras*
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"Rescue those being led away to death; hold back those staggering toward slaughter."
— PROVERBS 24:11

FROM ME TO YOU



The author (Photo courtesy of 88 Productions)

Creating the podcast was a much bigger challenge than I expected. I'm a talkative man by nature, and a comedic one. But stuff a couple of microphones in front of my mouth — one hanging overhead, one clipped to my shirt. Point several cameras accusingly at me. Surround me with lighting that cooks me like a microwave dinner. Then tell me to look at an imaginary spot instead of the person asking the question.

I was raised to look people in the eye when you're talking to them. Staring off into space was rude. It says you're not paying attention, or you're bored. A lifetime of that instinct doesn't switch off because someone points at a spot on the camera tripod.

Then came the questions. Not the prepared ones I'd studied — random, multi-part, shot from the hip. Deer in the headlights is the phrase, and it's the phrase because it's accurate. There were restarts. There were retakes. There was one break where I had to step outside to gather myself.

Honestly, I thought I bombed. I told myself it can only get better, that practice makes perfect. The 88 Productions crew were fantastic and the questions were good ones — I'm just a newbie at this. They told me not to be so hard on myself, that there was plenty of quality material, and that I'll be pleased once they work their magic.

I hope they're all-powerful wizards like Gandalf.

Below are links to two reels with a combined nearly 200,000 views, a link to the song inspired by and used in the final chapters of Book One, and a link to our mission website and bookstore. ENJOY!

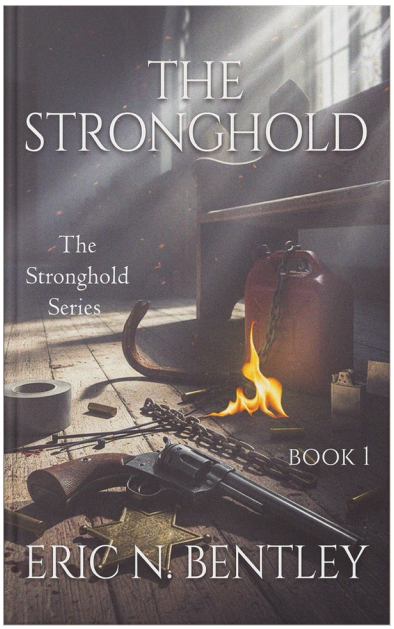








BOOK NUGGETS



They say bigger is better. Book One runs 588 pages — and I very nearly published it as two.

The honest version is that I didn't know when to quit. I kept writing, the story kept going, and by the time I looked up I had 588 pages on my hands and a decision to make: split it or leave it whole.

The split point was already sitting there, and it was a good one. Surprisingly, a key character finds themselves sentenced and taken to prison — the kind of moment a book can end on and leave you desperate to know what comes next. Part Two would have opened eight years later, on the day of their release. Two books, one clean break, and a cliffhanger doing exactly what a cliffhanger is supposed to do.

What settled it was balance. The break falls early, around page 215, which would have left Part One thin and Part Two carrying 373. Readers would have come away from the slim one feeling like they'd been handed half a book — *where's the rest of it?* — while one thick book feels like it was worth it. So I left it whole, and *The Stronghold* is 588 pages because that's just how long the story is.

BEYOND THE PAGE



Author in the 88 Productions studio

The cameras are rolling — and we're looking for a few faces.

The podcast. Filming began this month, and four episodes are on the way. Ask the Author, Reader Book Questions, Know Your Nephilim — and a fourth I'm not ready to name yet. When they're finished you'll find them on our website under the Music & Videos tab, and I'll communicate to you the moment they're up.

The sizzle reel. The scene is chosen, the permits are in hand, the location is locked, and the props are acquired. Casting is under way. We're targeting mid-to-late September to film, with editing finished in October.

Want to be in it? We're interviewing extras for this scene and for scenes to come. If you'd like to be considered, apply at bentleyinspirations.com/extras. We're filming primarily in Tulsa, Oklahoma and the surrounding area — and with at least fourteen books in this series, there will be no shortage of opportunities for all ages.

CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT — *Julia Herrera*





BEYOND THE PAGE: We have three photos of you. What was happening in your life in each?

JULIA: The first photo is both a high and a low point in my life. My mother and I lived on edge every day. We lived in a home owned by a very bad man who was rarely around. When he was home I spent my time living and sleeping in a closet with my imaginary friend Jophiel. I could hear the bad things through the closet door, but Jophiel would sing to me to block it out. The very lowest point was an Easter Sunday where the bad man showed up and attacked both of us for attending church. During the worst part my mother yelled at me to get on my bike, run away as far as I could, don't look back, and don't come back. I knew the bad man had killed her.

BTP: That must have been the low point. What was the high point you mentioned?

JULIA: I pedaled my bike for what seemed like an eternity. I don't remember when I stopped but I found myself being carried by someone who placed me on that cot. A group of people surrounded me, prayed for me, and told me I was safe. Jophiel confirmed it to me, and I could feel the warmth, the love, and somehow knew I could believe them. That was the first night I ever slept feeling fully at peace. There was just something special about that camp.

BTP: And the next photo?

JULIA: Pastor Austin Peterson. Leader of the South Point Community Church and the missionary team that would visit our orphan camp from time to time. Although my mother took me to church when she could, I owe my relationship with my Heavenly Father, the only father I would ever need, to that wonderful man. I couldn't read but I held onto that Bible and Pastor Peterson's teachings like a life jacket.

BTP: I see that's him in the last photo but many years later.

JULIA: Yes, about ten years later. Same Bible, now showing signs of wear and tear, but by then I could read and devoured the precious words and retained the living words like a sponge. It was another high point in my life, but I can't reveal the joy of that day. Partially because it would be a huge spoiler and partially because...

BTP: I can see it has deep emotional meaning, I am sorry.

JULIA: No, you misunderstand. The emotions are joy and happiness. At that point I was at the pinnacle of my peace and as they say 'on top of the world'.

BTP: It sounds like there is a 'but' coming.



Brett Sedlack, Creative Producer · Pablo Cordova, Director · Brooke Bills, Chief Creative Officer · Dr. Dan Langley, Development Executive

An Honor to Join The Stronghold Series

Being chosen as the production company for *The Stronghold* Series and Bentley Inspirations is a genuine honor for our team.

As we have had the pleasure of getting to know Mr. Eric N. Bentley, one thing has become immediately clear: he takes this mission seriously.

Over the years, we have had the privilege of supporting organizations such as OUR and Love146, so the mission behind Bentley Inspirations resonates deeply with us. Knowing that proceeds from this work will help support the rescue and rebuilding of lives impacted by human trafficking gives this project a purpose far beyond producing a great book, podcast, or series.

Eric holds himself, his work, and the message behind *The Stronghold* Series to an exceptionally high standard. Yet beneath that intensity is something equally powerful: a genuine belief in the goodness people are still capable of, even after experiencing or witnessing some of humanity's darkest moments.

That balance is what makes *The Stronghold* Series so compelling. It does not shy away from difficult realities, but it also reminds us of courage, compassion, resilience, and the choice to remain good in a world that does not always make that easy.

We are incredibly excited to help bring that vision to life.

We recently had the opportunity to record Eric's new podcast, **Beyond the Page**, and in true perfectionist fashion, Eric left the studio convinced he could have done better.

From our side of the production table, we saw something entirely different.

We saw humility. We saw authenticity. We saw conviction. And, above all, we saw passion.

Eric may have walked away feeling as though he had "bombed" his first podcast, but we cannot wait for audiences to hear what we heard. His commitment to making a difference in the fight against human trafficking is not something he simply talks about; it is woven into the way he approaches his work, his stories, and this mission.

That level of self-expectation says a great deal about the person behind the work. High standards create high results, and Mr. Eric N. Bentley certainly sets the bar high.

We are proud to be part of *The Stronghold* Series, proud to support the mission behind Bentley Inspirations, and honored to play a role in bringing these stories and conversations to a larger audience.

Because this is about more than entertainment.

You won't simply read a story or watch a podcast. You'll feel the purpose, the heart, and the passion behind it.

— The 88 Productions Team

JOIN THE FIGHT

Proceeds from the selling of books, merchandise, etc. will be donated to organizations whose primary focus is the rescue, recovery, rehabilitation or restoration of victims of human trafficking.

GIVE AT BENTLEYINSPIRATIONS.COM/DONATE

Fiction as a Weapon

Author Eric N. Bentley's own missionary experience in Trinidad and Tobago opened his eyes to the devastating reach of trafficking networks. That encounter became the heartbeat of this series and the fuel behind its philanthropic mission.

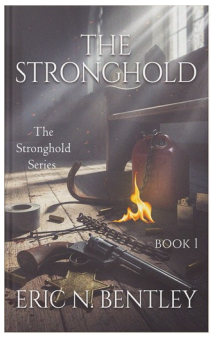
The Stronghold Series was never meant to sit quietly on a shelf. From its inception, the series has carried a dual purpose: to grip readers with a story they can't put down, and to open their eyes to a crisis most people would rather not see.

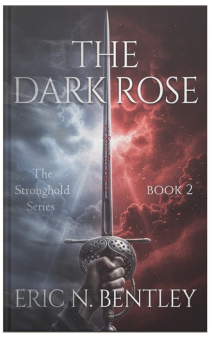
Eric's prayer for every reader is simple: that somewhere within these pages, they'll find a moment that makes them laugh, a moment that makes them cry, and a moment that compels them to turn inward — to reflect on their own spiritual lives and on the suffering that demands a response.

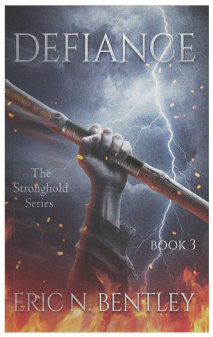
"These stories are my weapon. If I can write a book that grips someone by the heart and then opens their eyes to what's happening in the real world — that's a chain broken. That's a stronghold torn down."

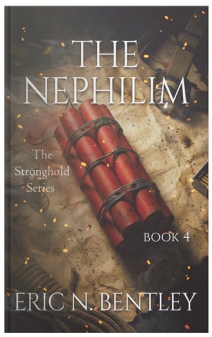
— Eric N. Bentley, Author

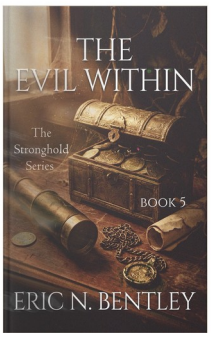
BOOK NEWS & UPDATES

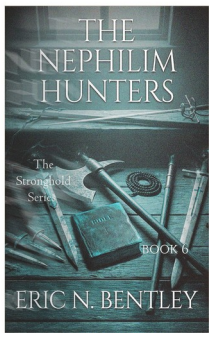










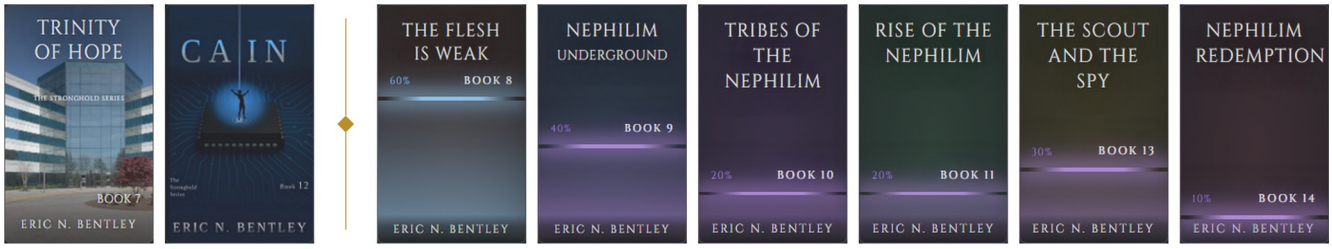


The current collection of books — so far...

Fourteen books make up *The Stronghold* Series as it stands today. The first six, shown here with full covers, are already available for purchase. Books bought through our website send the most to the mission — other online sources and traditional brick-and-mortar bookstores keep 40%–50% of the proceeds meant to fund our work.

Of the remaining eight, Books 7 & 12 are finished manuscripts pending final typesetting and cover design. The other six book images have a horizontal progress bar showing how far along each one currently is.

How can you help? If Book One is still sitting on your shelf or your reader, that is the best place to start. And when you finish it, providing an honest review — social media sites of your choice, likes, follows, etc. (you know the drill) — is the single most useful thing you can do for us. Reviews are how strangers find these books, and every reader who finds them is another member of the family and another reader funding the mission.



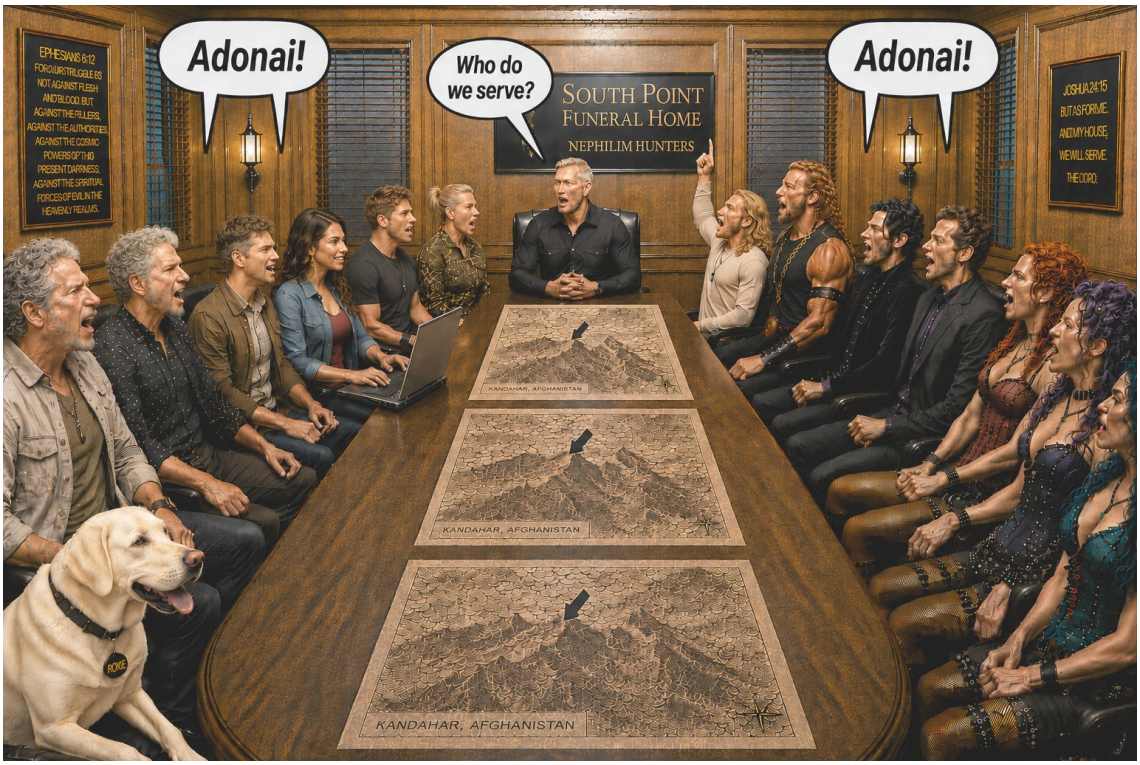
Books in production

There are more books beyond the fourteen displayed. They are still in the 'creation' stage — which means they exist on stacks of paper notes all over my office, rows in my Notes & Nuggets spreadsheet, or as brainstorming that hasn't made it out of my head yet.

DID YOU KNOW?

Previous newsletters are available on our website under the **About** tab.

UNTIL NEXT TIME



The image above is the good guys — the team finally assembled by Book Six, The Nephilim Hunters. At the end of every meeting and every field discussion, whoever is leading asks the same question — *Who do we serve?* — and the rest answer in unison: *Adonai.* Hebrew. The Lord.

I think of all of you — readers, members, supporters, friends — as part of *The Stronghold* family, and more importantly as part of the Bentley Inspirations family. The mission **Fiction With Purpose** is God's work: doing what we can for the victims of human trafficking. We're serving Him, following a path He laid out for us and through us, answering the way Joshua did: *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* — Joshua 24:15

So my sign-off, in this newsletter and every one after it: **Who do you serve?**



ERIC N. BENTLEY
AUTHOR OF THE STRONGHOLD SERIES
FOUNDER, BENTLEY INSPIRATIONS, INC.

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