Hi, I'm Julia Heaberlin, and I'm here to talk to you about my latest thriller, *We Are All the Same in the Dark*. I love this beautiful cover. They told me not to pose with something distracting behind me, and I guess that picture is a little distracting, but girl with her hands over her ears represents how I feel a lot of the times in this exploding world, and I figure you do, too. And looking at that picture, it's also what I want you to feel when you're reading my novel, which is “What the hell is happening here?”

This book started the way all my novels do, which is just a tiny vision in my head, a character that won’t go away. In this case, it was a young girl, lost by the side of the road, mute, who only had one eye. She is one of two ferocious heroines in this novel, the other being a young cop named Odette, who is determined to solve not only the mystery of this young girl, but the mystery of what happened to a friend of hers ten years earlier when she disappeared, leaving only a bloody handprint on her farmhouse door.

This book would not have been possible without the help of a lot of experts. There were so many that I can’t name them all, but in particular an ocularist named Randy Trawnik, who makes prosthetic eyes that are so beautiful that men, women, and children can keep them a secret if they want to. He introduced me to a number of young women and girls with one eye, who sat down with me and told me their brave and vulnerable stories and inspired the characters in this book in a way that I never could have otherwise. They changed my own perception of physical beauty and strength, and I’ll be forever grateful for that.

This book, of course, is also a twisty thriller. There are some shocks, here and there. They were a surprise to me too, because I’m not an outliner, so things just happen the way they do. I do hope that you read and love this thriller. And, you know, I guess we should keep our hands over our ears only some of the time. But always over our hearts. And I feel like, as corny as that sounds, I think we’re going to make it through this. I think we’re going to be a better world. And I believe, like I know you do, that reading and listening and learning helps.

Thanks for hearing my story, have a good rest of the summer / early fall. Thanks!

And now I’m going to read you a little bit from *We Are All the Same in the Dark*. This is the prologue to the book. It is in the voice of a cemetery caretaker who is being interviewed for a true crime documentary about what happened to Trumanell Branson. And I warn you my Texas accent comes out a little when I read this.

[Author reading]
It takes about eight to ten hours to hand-dig a grave, more if you was doing it in the dark. Five to six if you have a helper. It ain’t like the movies. You need more than just a spade with a good blade. You need a chainsaw for splitting the roots. A pick. Even if you don’t hit rocks, you got Texas clay, which can be as bad as rocks. I always carry a measuring tape and a yard-stick, because you’ve got to make a hole a lot bigger than in your mind’s eye. And you’ve got to go deep enough that folks and animals walking by can’t smell the body rotting. I’d go eighteen inches of soil on top to be safe. Bottom line, if you’re asking me my opinion, I don’t think that Branson girl will ever be found. I never saw anything like the search for her body. Every farm. Every bit of lake property. The cops got a color-coded map and took it inch by inch, year by year, until it was all done. I’ll tell you this: If that girl was buried around here, and buried fast, she was buried by someone who knows his dirt. That might be a farmer. That might be a person who’s killed a lot.