

**Lecture at USC:**  
Writing reality and Reality  
of Writing in French

**Francophone Resource Center**

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**usc College**  
OF LETTERS, ARTS & SCIENCES

**Grégoire Bouillier**

Author of  
**The Mystery Guest**

**Lecture :**  
« **Ecriture de la Réalité et  
Réalité de l'écriture** »

**18 OCTOBER 2006**

**12H00  
THH 170**

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## Bio

Grégoire Bouillier is 43 years old. He spent his childhood in the Champs-Élysées neighbourhood. After several years spent roaming, during which he was a homeless and a pen-pusher in a news agency, he became a journalist and a painter. He still lives and works in Paris.

After writing for the magazines *l'Infini* and *NRV*, he published his first book *Rapport sur moi* (Allia) which received the Prix de Flore in 2002. In this book, he tells us about his life in an autobiographical form, in a brutal and funny way. Through various personal stories, he gives us his vision of the family, and more widely, of society itself. *Rapport sur moi* tells us a lot about the author but also leads us to reflect on ourselves. This is where the strength and originality of this book lie. *The Mystery Guest* (*L'invité mystère*) forthcoming this fall in the US from Farrar Strauss & Giroux, is his second book.

## About *The Mystery Guest* :

When the phone rang on a gloomy fall afternoon in 1990, Grégoire Bouillier had no way of knowing that it was the woman who'd left him, without warning, ten years before. And he couldn't have guessed why she was calling—not to apologize for, or explain, the way she'd vanished from his life, but to invite him to a party. A birthday party. For a woman he'd never met.

This is the story of how one man got over a broken heart, learned to love again, stopped wearing turtlenecks, regained his faith in literature, participated in a work of performance art by mistake, and spent his rent money on a bottle of 1964 bordeaux that nobody ever drank. *The Mystery Guest* is, in the words of *L'Humanité*; a work of “fiendish wit and refinement.” It pushes the conventions of autobiography (and those great themes of French literature: love and aging) to an absurd, poignant, and very funny conclusion. This translation marks the English-language debut of an iconoclast who has attracted one of the most passionate cult followings in French literature today.

