

Interview with Allan McLeod **Author of *Death Spirits***

Reader Views is happy to be talking with Allan McLeod, author of the new book “Death Spirits.” Allan is being interviewed by Juanita Watson, Assistant Editor for Reader Views.

Juanita: Thanks for talking with us today Allan. Would you please tell us the storyline of your new book “Death Spirits”?

Allan: This is a story about logical versus illogical; a story about a logical mind confronting the illogical idea that a murder victim's spirit lives on; a story about a logical thirty-five-year old junior detective in charge of her first murder investigation trying to deal with the illogical idea that the death spirit of a victim has taken control of her mind and body.

Juanita: What inspired you to write this book?

Allan: I grew up in towns like that in the novel where teachers, particularly those beloved by their students, seemed like royalty. These strangers who each September, arrived from some far away place, were our fairytale princes and princesses, they were infallible, and it seemed impossible to comprehend anything bad happening to them, much less murder. I wanted to explore how small town people like those I've known from my past would respond to a disaster of this magnitude: Would they circle the wagons? Would they begin pointing fingers?

Juanita: Can you give us some background information on your lead characters?

Allan: The protagonist, Kate Flanagan, is a highly motivated, thirty-five-year old junior detective in charge of her first murder investigation. She has been with the Minot, ND PD for six years and partnered for one year with Bob Hutton, the departments' most senior detective and considered by all, including Hutton, to be the best. A third important character is the spirit that occupies Kate's mind and body, the death spirit of the murder victim, Zoë Brown, a popular and attractive twenty-five-year old school teacher, but of equal or greater significance is the role of a beautiful young American Indian woman who helps Kate understand the messages of the spirits.

Juanita: What is the significance of the American Indian theme in “Death Spirits”?

Allan: I've always liked the idea of aboriginal peoples' sacred burial grounds and their reverence toward their ancestral spirits, something I doubtless picked up from countless western movies and comic books. Then, once I had decided on the story's venue and began researching the area's history

and geography, I kept bumping into Lewis and Clark and the Shoshone Indian woman, Sakakawea, who led Lewis and Clark's expedition to the Pacific. The more I read about this incredible woman, the more I wanted to remember her in my story; from that the broader American Indian theme easily flowed.

Juanita: Are there any underlying reasons that the murdered school teacher Zoë Brown decided to pick the fledgling detective Kate Flanagan to catch her killer?

Allan: Zoë's spirit believed that a woman would best understand Zoë's connections to the other women in the story, living and dead. Of equal importance was the need for the host to be accepting of the fact that Zoë's spirit was a reality, and Kate Flanagan's veteran partner, Bob Hutton, didn't seem a good choice.

Juanita: Where does "Death Spirits" take place?

Allan: In a small North Dakota village near the Canadian border. The town, Largeville, is fictional, but only in name; the characters are derived from people that watched me grow up, that lived in the houses along my paper route, that bought their groceries in the store where I worked. I used the name, Largeville, because, to the residents of thousands of tiny villages across the country, their village is not some insignificant map dot, it is the center of their universe, it is large.

Juanita: What drew you into this storyline with a paranormal-mystery theme?

Allan: I'm always trying to think up good mystery stories that depart from the norm, and for a year I had this collection of ever increasing mind waves about death spirits bopping around inside my skull that I finally had to write down to see if they might knit into a story. Doubtless, fueling my mind waves is a spiritual connection to a loved one that I like to think is still very much around.

Juanita: Who would enjoy reading "Death Spirits"?

Allan: I think any reader who likes a piercing mystery with a strong female protagonist, a reader who likes a story that reaches down inside and asks her to believe that which can't be seen, a reader who likes a story that jangles more than a few nerves; it is not for those who prefer cozies.

Juanita: Allan, what do you hope readers experience and/or understand by reading your book "Death Spirits"?

Allan: The entertainment of discovering what a murder might do to the people of a small town, finding out that things aren't what they seem, and learning that what we knew in the morning is diddlysquat to what we'll know when our eyes and brain click off at day's end.

Juanita: Allan, would you tell your readers of your other written works?

Allan: I've just published another murder mystery, Barely Dead, the first in my Paige Harrington Mystery series. The second in the series, The Praetorian File, is due to be published later this year. I've written but not published three other mystery stories. Two will be published next year; the third, my first attempt at novel writing, I may keep in my drawer, or in modern lingo, on my C drive. I have several short stories published on blogs and I write a weekly blog newsletter that pokes a sharp stick at big business and big government.

Juanita: What was your career before you decided to become a full-time writer?

Allan: Commercial and investment banking, and before the eyebrows shoot up, I wrote extensively in both, though my stories had more to do with attracting gobs of money to worthy and not so worthy projects. Perhaps that's where I developed a flair for fiction.

Juanita: Allan, how can readers find out more about you and your endeavors?

Allan: This is the link to my web. I keep it up to date with links to all my posted writing and published books, etc. - <http://wammac.web.aplus.net/>

Juanita: Thanks for talking with us today Allan. Readers of "Death Spirits" will be more than happy to hear that you have more mysteries in the works! We hope much success for you. Do you have any last thoughts for your readers today?

Allan: Do you want to know the secret of feeling really great? Read to someone you love (gold fish included) a few minutes a few nights a week.