

Interview with Richard E. Roach, author of *Scattered Leaves*

Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to interview Richard E. Roach, who is here to talk about his new book "Scattered Leaves."

Richard E. Roach was born in Galveston, Texas in 1931. He attended Trinity University, and the University of Texas. He served in the USAF for four years as a drill sergeant. Richard has invented several electronic instruments used in the detection of oil and gas, formed his company, manufactured them and sold them nationwide as Richard E. Roach, Inc. Before the oil business fell upon hard times, he sold the business for several million dollars and retired to write. Richard is married and Norma has put up with him since 1948. He has three grown children.

Short stories of his have been published in "Man's Story 2," "Happy 2007," "Iconoclast 2006," and "Bibliophilos 2006." His first novel, "Scattered Leaves" will hit the book stores on September 1, 2008. His second novel in this series, "Scattered Money," will be published in 2009.

Tyler: Welcome, Richard. I'm glad you could join me today. "Scattered Leaves" definitely sounds like a suspenseful story. Will you begin by telling us what the situation is when the book opens?

Richard: Ben McCord comes home from witnessing a blow-out on a drilling rig to find his wife raped and murdered.

Tyler: When Ben first finds his wife dead, does he have any idea who would want to kill his wife?

Richard: No idea at all. At first he's overcome with grief; but soon the sorrow of it all is placed on a back shelf and anger begins to boil.

Tyler: Tell us more about Ben McCord. Is he a typical hero, or what do you think will make him appeal as a main character to readers?

Richard: Ben isn't like a hero. He's like John Wayne, not the movie star, the real man. I believe his name was Michael (Duke) Morrison. Except for the grief period, he plods ahead meeting life head on. But where's he's different—he doesn't stop. He bulls his way through obstacles and he's gentle with women and children.

Tyler: Richard, what first gave you the idea to write this story?

Richard: I don't have a good answer for this. Ben is a man I can admire. He is big and tough but he doesn't lie, cheat or steal. Some might call him dumb but I call him "MAN." A real man is at his best when he "stoops" to help a needy person. Sooner or later Ben gets there.

Tyler: What then drives Ben to go out and search for his wife's killer rather than just leaving the situation up to the police to figure out?

Richard: He has no faith in the political situation concerning law enforcement in Dallas. Too much corruption, the media news is full of it. However, he would have taken it personally anyway. He wanted to crush the perpetrator beneath his heel.

Tyler: Would you explain to us why you chose the title of “Scattered Leaves”?

Richard: Ben came up with the title when he noticed the leaves in his backyard being blown into June’s immaculate flower beds. (This is after her untimely death). He felt human lives were tossed about in the same fashion, like so many dead leaves.

Tyler: Will you tell us about the beautiful doctor Ben meets and who helps him in solving the case? Is there a love interest that develops between them?

Richard: She is a knockout, not prettier than June, just a different breed of beautiful woman. Year round tan, emerald eyes, hair darker than amber, and a tiny body with a figure like a radiator cap from a Roaring Twenties automobile. At first he admires her grit in overcoming the brutal assault she suffered through...but Ben, slowly and with terrible misgivings, falls in love with her and they get married.

Tyler: Why does Ben first get involved with her? Does she have some connection or knowledge of who killed Ben’s wife June?

Richard: The hoods, who are led by crooked FBI agents, kidnap Ben to see what he knows about their involvement with drugs. They kidnap PJ to use as a play toy.

Tyler: Will you tell us a little bit about Ben’s quest to find his wife’s killer? I understand Ben travels through several states. Will you tell us about how he tracks the killer from one place to the next?

Richard: After several botched attempts to kill Ben in Dallas the FBI man decides to get Ben to follow him out of Dallas to get him out of the news. He makes it easy for Ben to follow him. He felt Dallas was getting too hot for him.

Tyler: I understand the climax scene is in the Big Thicket of Texas. Will you explain about that place for readers not familiar with the area?

Richard: Just imagine a gigantic swamp thick with huge trees, palmetto, vines of all types, wild flowers, saw grass, and quicksand that’s 10-30 miles across, and nearly a hundred miles in length, filled with snakes, alligators and other unfriendly denizens of the dark and you’ll have it.

Tyler: Richard, I understand the book has many graphic scenes. Why did you choose to incorporate a lot of violence into the novel?

Richard: In this book we’re dealing with the scum of the earth. Life means nothing to them. You have to act quickly to stay alive. Lives to the hoodlums mean about the same as a dollar to a politician.

Tyler: Richard, our reviewer at Reader Views commented about how well you write. What do you feel is the most important aspect of writing a story like “Scattered Leaves”?

Richard: It is necessary for any writer to have a good imagination and to have back-up people to correct all your mistakes. After my editor, Caroline Sori, finished the final draft, I actually enjoyed reading it!

Tyler: Richard, how do you classify “Scattered Leaves”? Is it a mystery, suspense etc.?

Richard: A Mystery. You don’t know who the killer is. (A hint) It’s not the bad guys in the FBI.

Tyler: What attracts you about writing this kind of a novel?

Richard: With one exception, I’ve never considered writing anything but crime novels. There is so much crime in the U. S. it staggers the imagination of middle class citizens. Something needs to be done about it: Public executions would help; I believe the last one was in 1936. I’ll bet you can’t name a single child that was raped and murdered in 2006 or 2007.

Tyler: What would you say has been your biggest influence in your writing—other writers or films, or something else?

Richard: John D. MacDonald and Erle Stanley Gardner by a half-mile.

Tyler: Would you be willing to give us a little hint of what is to happen in the sequel?

Richard: In “*Scattered Money*” someone kills Ben and PJ’s friend, and they hit the trail to find the person responsible.

Tyler: Thank you for joining me today, Richard. Before we go, could you tell us about your website and what additional information may be found there about “Scattered Leaves”?

Richard: My website is www.richarderoach.com. Thank you so much for the stimulating questions. If you enjoy the trials and tribulations of Travis McGee, you’ll probably like Ben McCord—the man’s man that women love.

Tyler: Thank you, Richard, for the interview. It certainly sounds like you know how to give your readers a wild ride. Good luck with both “Scattered Leaves” and “Scattered Money.”

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