

A CONVERSATION WITH DON BRUNS *Reel Stuff*

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF, HOW AND WHEN YOU STARTED WRITING.

After reviewing my work, Sue Grafton gave a long list of criticism, and advised that I attempt to start writing a new book with her suggestions. I met Grafton at a mystery conference in Tucson, Arizona about 13 years ago. She was auctioning off a critique of a manuscript for charity and I bought the critique. Grafton read the second book, and said that she felt I had the makings of a good writer, but he needed to pay attention to details.

With this advice, I finished the second book, *Jamaica Blue*. Grafton read the book in one sitting and called me the next day. She told me "It's good. It's really good. This is publishable."

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE YOUR NOVEL?

My editor said they wanted a new book and they would pay me.

Actually, I wandered onto the set of Charlie's Angles in Miami and was thrown off. It was an outdoor park where my TV show is being filmed. I thought Skip and James could get a job as security guys throwing people who wander onto the set, off!

HOW DID YOU USE YOUR LIFE EXPERIENCE OR PROFESSIONAL BACKGROUND TO ENRICH YOUR STORY?

I pitched a story to Henson Productions several years ago at the old Charlie Chaplin Studios. I used that background in the book.

ANYTHING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL IN YOUR NOVEL?

Yes. It's about two 24 year old guys who will never mature or grow up.

ARE ANY CHARACTERS BASED ON PEOPLE YOU KNOW?

Yes. Sold three characters for charity and made \$2500.

WOULD YOU SAY THAT YOUR NOVEL IS MORE PLOT DRIVEN OR CHARACTER DRIVEN?

I think the characters are comfortable, but the plot is a departure. It involves contracts and insurance policies in the film industry.

WHO IS YOUR FAVORITE OR MOST SYMPATHETIC CHARACTER? AND WHY?

It's always Emily Minard. She is Skip's girlfriend and suffers greatly by hanging with the two guys.

WHO IS YOUR LEAST SYMPATHETIC CHARACTER? AND WHY?

The least sympathetic character in ***Reel Stuff*** is a talent agent named Juliana Londell. She is a very tough, ruthless character. But, she seems to get her clients work. She is probably the female equivalent of Ari Gold - the agent on *Entourage*. Tough, ruthless, sarcastic, but gets the job done.

WHAT PART OF WRITING YOUR BOOK DID YOU FIND THE MOST CHALLENGING?

The middle. Always the middle. Keeping tension after you've created it.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE THAT READERS WILL TAKE AWAY FROM YOUR BOOK?

An understanding of a different side of the movie business.

HOW DO YOU DIAL UP THE TENSION TO KEEP YOUR READERS ON THE EDGE OF THEIR SEATS?

Pull a gun.

WHAT WRITERS HAVE INSPIRED YOU?

Elmore Leonard, Lee Child, Mike Connelly, Sue Grafton

WHAT IS THE WRITING PROCESS LIKE FOR YOU?

I have no set process. When the spirit moves me, I write. I am motivated by a deadline.

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE ABOUT WRITING THAT YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

Write every day. I never have, but I'm certain it's good advice.

WHAT IS THE WORST PIECE OF ADVICE ABOUT WRITING THAT YOU'VE EVER RECEIVED?

Write every day.

WHAT'S NEXT FOR YOU? ANY NEW BOOKS IN THE PIPELINE?

I'm thinking of a novel set in New Orleans, and planning what Skip and James would do if they won a trip to New York.

ANY FINAL WORDS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SAY ABOUT YOURSELF, YOUR NOVEL, OR LIFE IN GENERAL?

I'm always surprised by my characters.