

## **A CONVERSATION WITH RICHARD TORREGROSSA**

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

I began studying art and wanted to become an illustrator, but fell in love with writing in college and have been fortunate enough to blend the two in six of my eight books.

### **WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO WRITE YOUR NOVEL?**

The Jason Statham movies written by Luc Besson and produced by Steve Chasman

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

A longtime martial artist and something of a clotheshorse—or as they say on the online style forums, a sartorialist. I thought it would be intriguing, challenging, as well as enormous fun to combine these disparate elements into a gripping action-packed mystery crime novel, something that's never been done before.

### **ANYTHING AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL IN YOUR NOVEL?**

Yes. Everything.

### **ARE ANY CHARACTERS BASED ON PEOPLE YOU KNOW?**

Yes. The novel takes place in Brooklyn, where I grew up, and in San Diego where I lived for many years and still spend a lot of time. All the characters are based or composites of people I know. Some of them might appear to be somewhat extreme, but they're out there.

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

Plot driven. My goal was to write a page-turner with a high-octane narrative that would not allow the reader to put it down easily.

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

Luke Stark, the Suited Hero, the protagonist, because his journey, both inner and outer, represents darkness and light, crushing loss, and ultimate redemption through courage and the power of love to renew even the most damaged soul. I also like him because he's a postmodernist hero, lives by his own rules and morality, thinks all institutions are inherently corrupt, and though he is certainly no saint, his flaws reveal his humanity and a personal integrity.

### **WHO IS YOUR LEAST SYMPATHIC CHARACTER? AND WHY?**

Uncle Paulie. He's venal, a mobster, without any redeeming features, but he's a very shrewd and crafty—and entertaining—villain.

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

The language. I wanted to elevate it above the bland prose of authors in this genre.

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

That life is not about what you lost or what has been stolen from you or hard times but the love and redemption you have not yet found.

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

Economical descriptions and a fast-moving action-filled plot with characters who are never really who they appear to be.

### **WHAT WRITERS HAVE INSPIRED YOU?**

Luc Besson. James M. Cain, Gay Talese, Tom Wolfe, Truman Capote, William Styron, Henry James, Evelyn Waugh, Shelby Foote, V.S. Naipaul, Walter Benjamin...the list goes on and on.

### **WHAT IS THE WRITING PROCESS LIKE FOR YOU?**

A pure joy.

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

Just write, don't worry.

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

Take a writing class.

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

The second Luke Stark Suited Hero Novel. It's a real corker.

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

Art is my religion.