



Tied-In

The Newsletter of the International Association of Media Tie-in Writers

Murder, He Wrote

In July, IAMTW presented its first Grandmaster Award, the Faust, to Donald Bain, author of the *Murder, She Wrote* series of original mystery novels based on the classic television show of that name with Angela Lansbury. In addition to the 29 books in the series—all still in print with four more under contract—Bain is also the author or ghost author of another 60-plus books bringing his total to close to the century mark. *Tied-In* asked his wife, Renée Paley-Bain, who collaborates with him on the *Murder, She Wrote* books, to give us a glimpse into the background of this prolific author.

By Renée Paley-Bain

One of Donald Bain's favorite mottoes-to-live-by is: "If I had more time, I would have written less." It may be a little late for that. The author/ghost author of almost 100 books, who began his writing career making up wild tales for men's adventure magazines, is still filling his days writing for projects with tight deadlines. His output, which has included such genres as Westerns, Romance, Thrillers, Comedy, Mystery, Biography, and Business, has kept Don busy as a "writer for hire" for more than forty years, a career filled with ups and downs, adventures and frustrations and, maybe the best part, satisfaction. Don chronicled this different kind of "desk job" in an autobiography (see side bar) and continues to add to his colorful experiences each year.

As most of you do, I'm sure, Don starts and ends his day at his trusty computer. And perhaps also like many of you, he didn't start out as a writer.

"I sold children's shoes for a living, and then escaped to selling typewriters door-to-door," Don says. "I have a lot of respect for salesmen. Sales is a creative art, and not one I possess. But when you have to pay the rent and put food on the table, you do what you have to do."

While still in the employ of Underwood-Olivetti, Don began selling stories to the macho publications of the 1960s put out by Magazine Management, among them *SAGA* and *Man's World*.

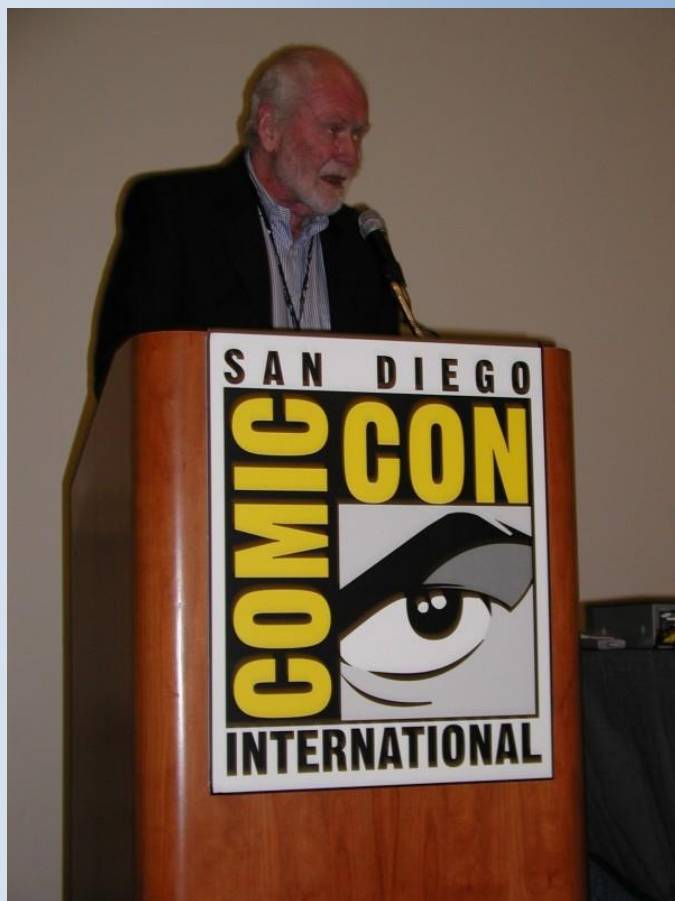
"A bunch of us would sit together in the reception room, waiting for a chance to pitch articles to the editor," he says. "I used to hang out with guys like



Bruce Jay Friedman, Kurt Vonnegut, and Mario Puzo, who I remember was planning to write a Mafia novel."

Don's imaginative contributions were rewarded and he made it into print with such forgotten masterpieces as those titled *Weekend Sailors*; *Joyriding Killers* and *Massage Parlor Prostitutes* and *The Lady Eichmanns: Why Have They Gone Unpunished?*

Magazine success led to his first book assignment ghosting for the original ghostwriter of *The Racing Flag*, a history of stockcar racing bylined by the then-president of NASCAR. The thousand-dollar flat fee (no royalties) was not enough to retire on, so Don kept his day jobs, moving from ad agency McCann-Erickson ("good job") to IBM ("bad move") to American Airlines ("whew!").

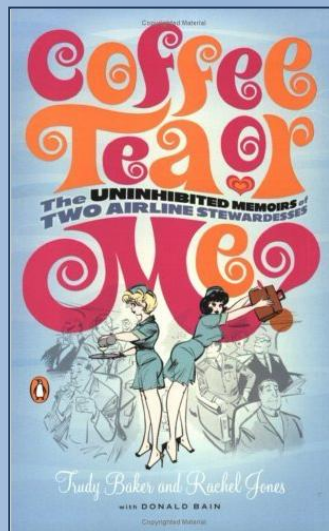


Don accepting his award in San Diego.

The job in American's PR department combined two of Don's loves, aviation and writing, and led to an evening at Toots Shor's, New York City's once-famous watering hole, in the company of two Eastern Airlines stewardesses who regaled him with funny stories about flying. That fortuitous meeting resulted in the book *Coffee, Tea or Me?*

"I wrote a proposal and sample chapter for Ed Brown at Pocketbooks. He kept asking for additional chapters and I would write them right away and send them in. I gave the book a working title from an old airline joke. A stewardess goes to the cockpit and asks the captain 'Coffee, tea or me?' He replies: 'Whatever's easier to make.' Chicka-boom!"

The proposal languished at Pocketbooks "under consideration" until Don's agent introduced him to editor Sam Post, who'd been hired by McFadden Bartell Publications to head up a new hardcover imprint, Bartholomew House. Sam liked the concept, and after another interminable delay, and several more drafts, the deal was made. Bartholomew House hired the two



Eastern stewardesses and they fronted for the book, using the pseudonyms Don had made up, Rachel Jones and Trudy Baker. They split the money fifty-fifty, fifty percent to the women, fifty to Don. Rachel and Trudy went off to tour the country promoting the book, and Don stayed home, burying his nerves by taking a new job writing and directing industrial films. But he didn't have to worry.

"Those were the days when flying was fun," Don remembers. "The book seemed to hit a nerve in the country and it just took off. It was a *New York Times* best-seller for five consecutive weeks, and was published in a dozen foreign editions. I was giddy with relief."

Sales of *Coffee, Tea or Me?*, its four sequels and nine spin-offs topped five-million worldwide. It was made into a television movie-of-the-week and its title showed up on coffee cups, baseball caps, aprons, tee-shirts, and other items (sadly before the days of licensing), becoming a cultural meme on the order of "Where's the Beef?" More important, it allowed Don to quit his job and become a "real writer."

Since those ethereal heights, Donald Bain has consistently earned his living writing, gaining a slot on the Best-Seller List many more times but, as with *Coffee, Tea or Me?*, never under his own name.

He wrote the "autobiography" of Veronica Lake, *Veronica*, collaborating with the Hollywood legend, rescuing her on several occasions, becoming a close friend, even paying for her funeral. But that's another story.

He wrote *A Member of the Family*, his own Mafia novel, under the byline Nick Vasile.

And he still writes a best-selling mystery series (more than twenty books long) for a famous name that contractual obligations keep him from revealing.

Don's real name has appeared on the covers of maybe a dozen of his books, among them *Long John Nebel*, the biography of a late-night radio talk-show king; the still-controversial and cult-classic *The Control of Candy Jones*, a non-fiction account of a human guinea pig in the CIA's Cold War mind-control experiments; and Don's personal favorite, *War in Illinois*, later republished as *Charlie and the Shawneetown Dame*, a dramatized history of Prohibition gangsters.

"I've been very lucky to be able to make a living as a writer. Not many do. I saw a piece in the Author's Guild newsletter that said less than ten percent of their members are able to support themselves with their writing. That's a tough statistic."

When I introduce him as the author of the *Murder, She Wrote* novels, I say "The books are by Jessica Fletcher, who doesn't exist, and Donald Bain, who does."

Don's trick for succeeding as a writer has been to "say no to nothing."

"In the beginning, whatever came my way, I took it. There were some pretty bad deals, and I was broke a lot of the time, scrambling to pay the bills. But I just kept going after any writing jobs, and eventually the publishing industry saw me as a professional, and more offers came my way."

These days, when he goes downstairs to his office he's working as a woman. When I introduce him as the author of the *Murder, She Wrote* novels, I say "The books are by Jessica Fletcher, who doesn't exist, and Donald Bain, who does."

"Jessica's name is first," he points out. "It's a reminder to me that the publisher can come along at any time and bring in a new writer."

But, fingers crossed, that's unlikely to happen. Don has made the books his, and promoted them aggressively, doing book signings, speaking at writer's conferences, pushing them on his website (www.donaldbain.com), and carrying on an active dialogue with his readers, who are as quick to praise as they are to tell him when he's made a mistake.

"I answer every email I get. The *Murder, She*

Wrote fans are very vocal. Along with those who point out the error on page 67, I have other readers who write me on a regular basis, telling me about their families and their pets."

One avid fan sent him a box of all the books in the series, along with a long letter about his wife's favorite hobbies, their pet parrot, and other details of their lives so

Don could sign each book to her with a personal note.

Don credits his love of music—he's a jazz vibraphonist and sometime drummer—as one reason for the series' success.

"Writing is very musical. Each character's voice has a tone and the writing itself has a tempo, a beat. I listen for Jessica Fletcher's tone and tempo, and the readers tell me I've been successful in catching her voice. When your readers love the characters from a TV show, it's important for them to be able to visualize the actors performing the parts you write for them in your books."

Writing is a full-time, seven-day-week job, especially when a deadline is looming. Don and I recently moved to a townhouse condo, which perfectly suits that lifestyle.

The ground floor is all workspace: two offices, one for each of us, with a "conference room" in between—at least that's what we tell the IRS.

When we're working together on a book, as we do with the *Murder, She Wrote* series, one of us will write and the other will edit. Every now and then when the black days of writer's block descend, usually on my side, we'll sit together and try to brainstorm our way out of it. Sometimes that means reversing the process with the editor becoming the writer and vice versa. We're both, in the parlance of writers' groups, *pantsters*, that is we write by the seat of our pants and let the story unfold before us, rather than develop a meticulously laid out plot in advance. It's a bit scary for me, but it's the way Don has always written, and hey, it worked for him.

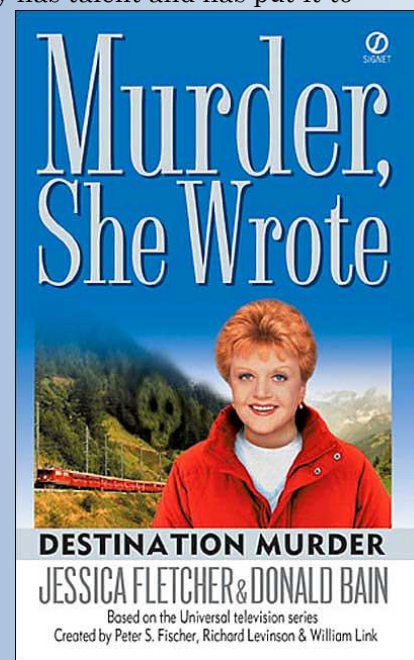
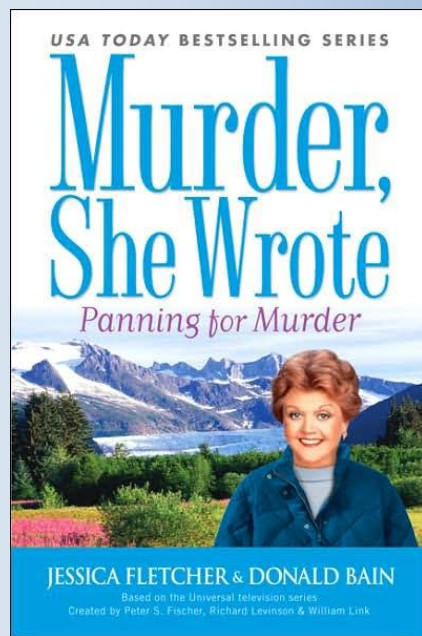
Not every writer is lucky enough to have such an expert collaborator working with her, especially one willing to share that knowledge. And I know how fortunate I am to learn the business from someone who's seen all aspects of this industry, both the good and the dreadful, and who still has a sense of humor about it. Even with some disappointing experiences in his past, Don is upbeat about writing and being a writer. As he says, he's a "glass half-full" guy. There's a quote from Calvin Coolidge he especially likes:

"Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent."

While Don certainly has talent and has put it to optimum use throughout his career, he credits his attitude as the real secret of his success: Leading the way are his openness to ideas and possibilities, his willingness to commit to a project, and once involved, to work as hard as he can to do his best.

"Whatever I'm writing at the moment is the most important thing I'll ever write. And it may be the last, so I'd better make it good."

And he does.



BotCon

By Brandie Tarvin

The year was 2007. And on June 26th, something strange was happening in a city called Providence, Rhode Island.

They called it BotCon.

The five-day convention started with two days of historic tours and, every toy collector's dream, a third-day tour of Hasbro's headquarters ending with a charity preview of the *Transformers* movie. The convention expected 4,000 to 8,000 attendees, but the true size of the horde is still currently unknown.

Guests included musician Stan Bush, who wrote songs for the original animated *Transformers* movie in 1986, and voice actors Peter Cullen and Michael Bell. Artists from IDW Comics were on hand to draw sketches of everyone's favorite characters. Fan favorites Benson Yee and Phil Zeman also put in an appearance. Yee, a board member of the "Transformers Collectors Club," is the author of Hasbro-authorized *Transformers* fanfics and comic books which are available only to club members. Zeman, a member of the spoof group MSTF (www.mstfonline.com), writes the yearly unofficial spoof of all things *Transformers*. Even Hasbro and its employees joined the fun. On display was the actual semi used in the movie for Optimus Prime's truck mode and a large truck, containing a secret lab and four Sector Seven secret agents who ruthlessly interrogated any citizen nearby about contact with alien life forms.

My fiancée, Kendrick Chua, and I went to hobnob with old friends and relieve the glory days of childhood obsessions. Most people attended, though, with only one thing in mind—robots.



Optimus Prime puts in an appearance at the con.

If you'd like to read books by Donald Bain, you might want to start with *Murder, He Wrote: A Successful Writer's Life*, his memoir about life in the writing dodge. It was initially published under the name *Every Midget Has an Uncle Sam Costume*, one of the chapter titles, and is a hilarious, charming, enlightening insider's guide to the publishing business from one writer's sometimes-skewed perspective. Other chapter titles include "One of our Sand Dunes is Missing," "Did You Really Say That?," "Could We Make it 'Magnificent' Charlatan?" and "Put a Little Gin in the Baby's Bottle." In its review, Publishers Weekly called the book "engaging," and said: "Readers will marvel at the diversity of subjects he's written on and his ability to convert nearly every opportunity into success."

This fall the next book in the *Murder, She Wrote* series, *Panning for Murder*, will be out in hardcover. It finds Jessica Fletcher in Alaska on the hunt for a missing woman and possible murder victim. Also out this fall will be the paperback version of *Three Strikes and You're Dead*, a baseball mystery with Arizona as the backdrop. Debuting next spring will be *Murder on Parade*, a Fourth of July story taking place in the readers' favorite setting, back home in Cabot Cove, Maine. Available now is the new paperback of *Coffee, Tea, or Murder* where the body is discovered on an airplane, of course. In the 29 earlier books, Jessica wings her way around the country and the world, finding bodies in such intriguing locales as San Francisco, Provence, Las Vegas, London, Colorado, and Mexico, among many others.

One reader posted this comment on Amazon: "Have read all the books in the series. Makes me think I am back on Sunday night with Angela Lansbury and the TV series."

An *almost* complete inventory of books by Donald Bain (there's still that ghost-list gap) may be found on his website, www.donaldbain.com. Look under "My Works."

Lots and lots of transforming robots.

Everything was about *Transformers*, from the hotel room keys with pictures of movie characters on them to the awards banquet with goody bags filled with Autobot and Decepticon swag. The fans wore T-shirts emblazoned with faction emblems, talked about their favorite new toys, and discussed their hopes for the upcoming cartoon show.

Pre-registrants who paid for "Primus" package memberships received a limited edition boxed set of five Decepticons with a special translucent Autobot figure as part of their admission price. Target, the department store chain, even went a step further by creating special "transforming" gift cards with mystery amounts of between five and five hundred dollars for all paying convention guests.

Saturday and Sunday were the days that were open to the public. Long lines formed along the convention center's fifth floor, comprised of long-time adult fans and newly-minted child fans. It was on these days that the invasion was complete. Contrary to popular belief, though, it wasn't giant alien robots who were taking over Providence.

It was the humans.

Slowly, painfully, on Sunday afternoon, the convention finally drew to a close.

Die-hard collectors meandered across the floor of the dealers' room waiting for last minute deals on goods the vendors did not want to drag home. Fans with too much to cart home waited for hours at the UPS Store's booth to ship home their bounty. And though the convention staff announced the closing of BotCon, gave away their last door prizes, and told everyone the dealers' room was closed, still the invading force hung on.

Some went out for dinner, the last huzzah of a week-long adrenaline buzz.

Others sadly gathered their waiting luggage, held in the hotel lobby by a watchful security guard, and reluctantly headed to their cars or taxis. A small group of stragglers even insisted on hanging out in the convention center until the last poster had been taken down, the lights turned out, and the security guards chased them out. It was their way of holding on to the emotional high of the weekend.

No one wanted it to end, but end it did, like all good things.

And so we all sighed.

There was regret.

There was relief.

And there was hope.

For this invasion, while short, is not the last one.

There will be another.

Next year, in 2008, once again the hordes will mass and fall upon different unsuspecting city.

Until then, fans will dream of giant robots and a yellow Camero with black racing stripes.

Origins

By Matt Forbeck

I missed the past two Origins due to deadlines and other details. At the previous year's Gen Con, my pal Sean Fannon (who was with GAMA at the time) asked me why I hadn't been around, and I glibly replied, "No one ever asks me." This year, GAMA invited me out as a guest of honor, and I happily accepted.

Unfortunately, set-up day for Origins was July 4, which is a big day with my family. Not wanting to miss the fireworks with my wife, mother, and kids, I asked if it would be all right if I showed up on Thursday, July 5, instead. Trey Reilly at GAMA graciously allowed for this.

I got up on the morning of the 5th, planning to head out by noon. Instead, I tackled a short editing job for a computer game company, which needed to be done right away. I figured it would be better to get it out of the way than hope I'd find some time to work on it once I arrived in Columbus, OH.

Unfortunately, the day dragged on, and I ended up leaving Beloit about 3 p.m. The drive takes about seven hours, but I lost an hour due to time-zone changes, so I got into town about midnight.

After checking in at the Drury Inn, I strolled over to the Big Bar at the Hyatt, the unofficial industry rallying point. I ran into a number of friends there, including fellow guest of honor Dave Williams. Formerly with AEG, Dave's now part of Red 5 Studios, plotting to take over the world with the next great MMO.

Dave hit me with the 10 Days of Fame theory. In short, in the gaming industry, no matter how famous you are, it only counts for about 10 days per year. These days occur only when you're at conventions, after which you slip into obscurity for the other 50+ weeks of the year.

"Famous in the gaming industry" is, of course, oxymoronic. Still, Dave's theory (which may have originated with someone else, as I recall) smacks of truth. It's one of the great things about conventions. While they're fantastic fun and a great way to get jazzed about the rest of your year, their fleeting nature makes it hard for anyone with even a single toe on the ground to get a swelled head about any such fame.

July 6

The next morning, I got up and grabbed breakfast with the private chef Origins provided for the guests of honor. Stunning, but true, the con provided three



squares a day by means of an excellent cook who'd set up shop in the Drury's atrium. I took advantage of this as often as I could.

After the exhibit hall opened, I wandered around the floor a bit. The lack of large publishers struck me hard. Of all the top-tier publishers, only Pokémon had a booth. Others had an official presence through partners or via tournaments, but roaming around without any chance of bumping into a booth from Wizards, WizKids, Upper Deck, Games Workshop, etc., gave the floor a surreal feel. Still, it meant I had lots of chances to see what everyone else in the industry is up to.

At 2 p.m., I joined Lew Pulsipher (designer of *Brittania*, among other things) for "Getting Started in Game Design." Lew reminded me that he'd actually sat in on a freelancing seminar of mine three years before, despite the fact he'd been first published long before I entered the industry. We hit it off well and did, I thought, a fine job of playing off each other. Lew is slow and steady, and I'm a bit more energetic ("hyper" as he called it), which made for a good mix.

At 5 p.m., I held my traditional "Freelancing 101" seminar. Many people showed up and asked lots of great questions. Mostly I let the audience steer such seminars, as it seems pointless for me to lecture people and hope that I hit upon the issues they want to discuss. I've never seen a crowd run out of things to ask.

After the seminar, I grabbed dinner from the show's private chef, and then wandered back to the Big Bar. I ended up spending the rest of the night there catching up with old friends until the place closed down around 2 a.m.

July 7

I skip breakfast and just make it to my 10 a.m. panel, a reprisal of "Getting Started in Game Design" with Lew. Unfortunately, although the panel is two hours long I have to bow out after a single hour, as I have another panel at 11 a.m.

I slip into "A Novel Approach to RPG Campaigns" just in time and join my old friend Aaron Allston behind the table. Once again, Aaron had a better feel for the structure of what he wants to say here, and I'm just chipping in outside shots and rebounds whenever I see an open basket.

Eventually I head back to my room to get changed for the Origins Awards, at which I've been asked to present an award. My category is Best Non-Fiction Publication, and I toss out the suggested script to muse out loud for a moment about how wonderful it is to work in an industry that has non-fiction awards for books about dragons. Not-so-coincidentally, perhaps, *Dragon Magazine* wins.

For me, highlights of the night include having a drink with Peter Adkison and his father Gary, who'd shown up to play games with his son all weekend; seeing Shane Hensley accept the award for Best RPG Supplement for *Deadlands Reloaded*; and listening to Captain Lou Zocchi give one of his hilarious spiels.

July 8

I get up in time to pack, check out, and get my bags to my car. Then I roll back to the hall for a banquet the convention holds for the guests of honor and the hall of famers who made it to the show. Aaron Allston and Alan Moon both officially accept their Hall of Fame trophies after testimonies from their Mike Stackpole and Mike Gray, respectively, and we all enjoy a decent meal.

I sit with a crew that includes Mike Gray, Jolly Blackburn, Anthony Gallela, Trey Reilly, Frank Chadwick, Larry Elmore, Duke Siefried, and Rick Loomis. When Trey asks what keeps everyone coming back to Origins, everyone responds: "To see our friends."

As I've mentioned many times before, the summer cons are going to your favorite summer camp year after year. You get to see great friends that you only hang out with two or three times a year, and you get to play games with them. Not a bad deal at all. At 4 PM, I join Aaron Allston, Will Hindmarch, Lisa Stevens, Dave Williams, and more for the "Future of the Gaming Industry Panel." None of us can say for sure what the gaming industry might look like in the future, but the consensus is that it will take a new form that none of us can predict, much as it has done a number of times in the past.

Then I jump into my car and head home, back to reality and far from whatever fame I might have found.

How I Went to the Dogs And Wrote a Novelization

By **Steven Paul Leiva**

On a cold and wintry night in 1997—no, actually this takes place in Hollywood, so it was probably a nicely temperate evening—a cute seven year-old girl named Emma sat down to dinner with her mother and her father at one of their favorite restaurants. It may have been because Christmas was near and carols were playing everywhere (and had been since the day after Halloween), it may have been because she was bored with adult chatter, or it may have been because she had always been a bright and intelligent child, but Emma suddenly turned over her paper placemat and—in a flash of inspiration—re-wrote the lyrics to “The Twelve Days of Christmas” making all the various gifts different breeds of dogs. She, of course, titled it, “The Twelve Dogs of Christmas.”

Now her father, Ken Kragen, a producer and personal manager who had spent years guiding and showcasing such performers as the Smothers Brothers and Kenny Rogers, knew talent when he saw it and showed Emma’s re-working of the Old English classic to people he knew at Thomas Nelson, the publishing company in Nashville, Tennessee. They loved Emma’s work and by the next Christmas had published it as a picture book featuring photographs of cute dogs (are there any other kind?) going through the various paces Emma had put them through. There were Boxers boxing, Huskies howling, and Sheepdogs snoring. There were five golden Retrievers and a Poodle in a doghouse.

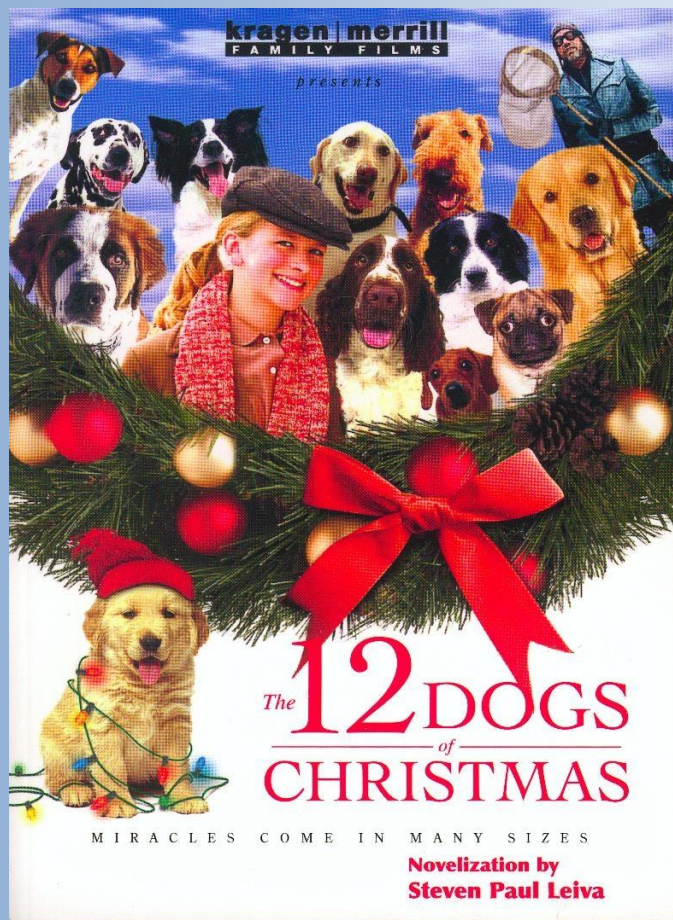
The book was a hit. And being seasonal continued and continues to be. So far, it has sold more than a half a million copies.

But what does this have to do with my having written a novelization? Well, I’ll get there, right now it’s back-story time, so drink your milk and have a cookie, and all will be revealed.

Several years after the book had been out Ken showed it to someone at Sony Family Entertainment who thought SFE’s animation division should take a look at it. That’s when Ken gave me a call, as we were friends and he knew that I was a writer and had spent a number of years involved in animation.

“Can you come up with a story for “The Twelve Dogs of Christmas,” he asked, “so we can pitch it at Sony.”

I wasn’t sure I could come up with a story. The book was, after all, just lyrics, with no story inherent except possibly about someone infected with a really bad case of the Spirit of Christmas. And any story one could come up with had to get to the point where a



bunch of people—most likely kids—get to sing “The Twelve Dogs of Christmas.” I wasn’t sure what that story would be. Plus, I had left animation and was concentrating on other things. So I told Ken I would think about it, but I wasn’t hopeful.

When the mind receives a challenge, though, it sometimes kicks in even when the spirit isn’t willing. Five minutes after I had hung up the phone I knew how to get to the final scene where a bunch of kids sing “The Twelve Dogs of Christmas.” I called Ken back and gave him the good news. He was thrilled and asked me to work up a pitch so we could meet with Sony ASAP.

These calls took place on the Friday before September 11, 2001. After which my mind was not totally on the dogs, Christmas, or the giving of gifts. But in Hollywood wheels never grind to a stop, and suddenly we had a pitch meeting set for real soon.

I wrote furiously, came up with a thirty-page treatment, and we took the meeting where I acted out the pitch to the best of my limited thespian skills, and Sony love it. It looked like a deal was in the offering.

Then an axe fell at Sony Family Entertainment, people were out of work, and the powers-who-were-left decided they would only do animated projects based on properties they already owned. You know, like “Men in Black.”

So the dogs, so anxious to go out to run and play—were caged.

So what was there to novelize? Did you like your cookie? Have another.

Several years later Ken showed my treatment to filmmaker, Kieth Merrill who loved it and wanted to make a live-action film out of it. Kieth's enthusiasm for the project inspired Ken to secure the financing so they could make it independently. Since I was unavailable, Kieth wrote the screenplay. They filmed the movie on location in a lovely snow-covered (by Nature and, on occasion, by them) town in Maine. Although the film, "The 12 Dogs of Christmas," had only a limited theatrical release, the DVD with minimal but smart marketing overseen by Ken sold a quarter of a million units in 2005, and was looking to do the same or better during the Christmas season 2006.

But where does a novelization come in? After all the film had been released, it was already on DVD. We all know that a novelization is written from screenplay while the film is in production so as to be published as the film is being released. Well, that's what makes this story a bit unique.

Late last year the publisher, Thomas Nelson, called Ken and said that they were still happy with the sales for "The Twelve Dogs of Christmas" picture book, but it was selling "a bit young" and they would love a book that they could publish for older kids. So, they asked, how about doing a novelization based on the film? Well, it made sense, didn't it? For the title, whether "Twelve Dogs" or "12 Dogs," was now a pre-sold one with a certain recognition factor. Ken called me again, this time asking if I wanted to write the novelization.

At first I wasn't sure I did. Kieth, in adapting my treatment, while keeping the basic concept and several major ideas, had made a lot of changes and had made it—rightly so—his own. But then something occurred to me. You know how people will read a good book and often say, "Wow, this would make a great movie!" Well, I've often sat through a film and said, "Wow, this would make a great book!" Seriously—I would begin to narrate in my head the scenes flickering before me. Possibly a mental quirk, but as it has never brought harm to others or myself I've never worried about it.

So I said yes, and began the very interesting process of not just watching the film over and over, but immersing myself in the experience of the film. For what is it we try to write about? Our experiences. But we experience on so many different levels—mental, physical, joyful, painful, the deeply felt, and the wonderfully shallow. And our experiences are not



always necessarily direct, but ones deflected from some other source than the raw reality in front of us. We have certainly learned that by the joys of the suspension of disbelief when we watch live theater all the way through the oddly more realistic film and television to the hardly-any-need-to-suspend-your-disbelief of virtual reality video games.

What I needed to narrate and describe was the story as it flowed in the film, the characters as played by such actors as the funny John Billingsley and the formidable Bonita Friedericy, the moods and tones of the settings and atmosphere as captured by the cinematography,

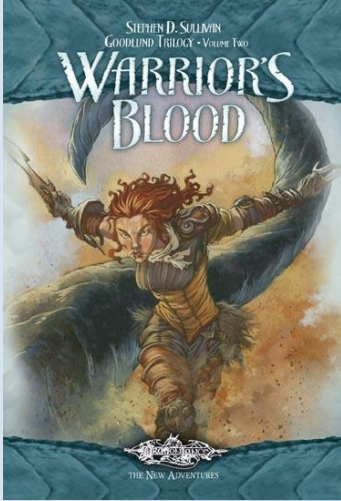
even the emotional underpinnings conveyed in the musical score.

Imagination came into play when I needed to fill in back story, elaborate on mental states, add scenes and dialog to enhance the story, because in prose I had the time and space to do so. When you adapt a book into a film it is almost always a *reductive* process. But when you adapt a film into a book it can very much be an *expansive* process. For example, in the treatment I had set the story in the depths of the Great Depression, and Kieth followed suit in the film. He shot the film "period" conveying that fact through props and costumes. I needed to convey it by bringing information into the storytelling, such as having Hoovervilles make a brief appearance, and being able to create a scene at the end that not only resolved an issue between two of the characters that the film did not have time to, but also allowed me to do a nice riff on Jell-O, the introduction of Lime as a flavor, and Jack Benny on the radio. Such expansion, I believe, may be the core of the craft and art of doing a novelization.

Writing the novelization for "The 12 Dogs of Christmas" turned out to be a fascinating and wonderfully fun process. And I thought—hey, I'm a pioneer! I must be the first person to ever write a novelization *after* a film's release. Sadly I'm informed by Greg Cox that in the 1970s Berkeley published a series of novelizations by "Carl Dreadstone" of Universal creature features from the 1930's and 1940's. And Keith DeCandido wrote a novelization of the first "Resident Evil" film after it's release as a companion to his novelization of the "Resident Evil" sequel.

So, I am not the first. But at least I'm now in select company with Mr. "Dreadstone" and Mr. DeCandido. Not to mention the IAMTW itself.

Sullivan Gets Rave Reviews



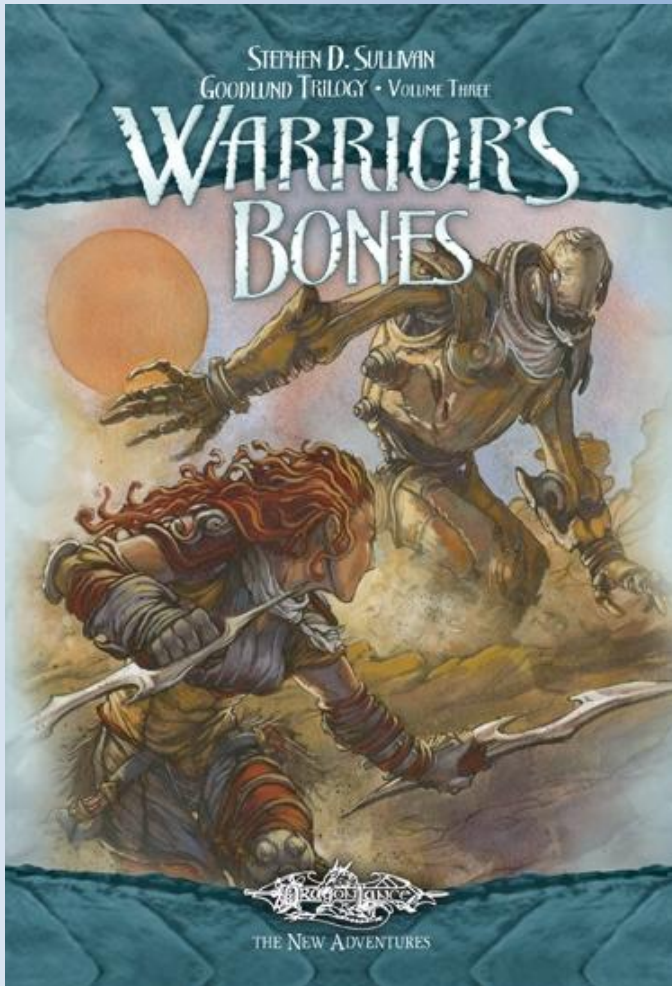
Stephen D. Sullivan is getting good reviews for *Warrior's Blood*, the second book in his Dragonlance trilogy. The Detroit Free Press compared the book to the Harry Potter series.

"Kids who are deep into fantasy will also like *Warrior's Blood* by Stephen D. Sullivan (Mirrorstone, \$5.99), the latest in a series of "Dragonlance: The New Adventures" books." -- DFP July 20, 2007.

And KidsBookshelf said, "A fast-paced and intriguing tale fantasy readers will enjoy."

The first book in the series, *Warrior's Heart*, was nominated for a 2006 Scribe Award. The final novel in the trilogy, *Warrior's Bones*, will be released at the end of 2007.

Visit his site at www.stephendsullivan.com.



Send Us Your News

Do you have a new novel on the shelves? A great convention story to share? Tied-In is a great place to report either.

We're especially looking for "Spotlight" articles—how you broke into the writing and tie-in business.

Ye editor's 'in basket' is empty at the moment . . . nothing on deck for the December-January issue. Show some holiday spirit and deliver something to her e-mail basket that can be printed in the next Tied-In.

E-mail news articles, writing advice, classified advertisements, and more to: jeanr@sff.net or jeanrabe@hotmail.com, and please mention tie-in or IAMTW in the message header.

IAMTW President—Max Allan Collins

IAMTW Vice President—Lee Goldberg

Website: www.iamtw.org

E-mail: tieinwriters@yahoo.com

IAMTW
PO Box 8212
Calabasas, CA 91372

All articles in this issue are
copyright 2007 by their
respective authors.

All other content copyright
2007 IAMTW.