

AN INTERVIEW WITH JEFFREY POSTON

(This is an interview Jeffrey Poston did in early 2015)

Q: Your novels are very diverse – historical westerns, covert ops suspense, high-tech action-adventure – which is your favorite?

A: The common element in all of my writing, no matter the genre, is action. I read action, I watch action on TV and in movies, and I write action. Whether it's westerns, adventure, or near-future sci-fi doesn't matter.

Q: How did you get started writing?

A: I actually wrote my first short story when I was nine. I saw a sci-fi monster movie on TV and wrote a five-pager. I can still see the monsters and the spaceships in my mind ☺ For my books, though, I remember seeing a Clint Eastwood western when I was in college (I fully admit Clint Eastwood was my childhood hero), and I was inspired to write my first western, which got published quite by accident in 1991!

Q: Which is easier – writing or getting published?

A: Personally, I think those are only two of the three parts of the business of writing. I enjoy writing, so that part comes easy for me. I never have to worry about writer's block because I have too much going on up in my brainpan, so I never run out of things to write. Technically, getting published online is pretty easy nowadays, but it's the marketing that is really the challenge, I think. Sooner or later, you've got to sell some books, and marketing is time-consuming and hard work.

Q: Self-publish or traditional publish?

A: I've done both. My first two books were picked up by traditional publishing houses, but I've chosen to take control of my own destiny by self-publishing my latest novels. Either way, though, you MUST have professional book covers designed for you and have several rounds of professional editing and proofreading or you're going to get trashed in the online reviews.

Q: Your novels push ordinary people into extraordinary hero roles. Is that intentional? Where does that come from?

A: The action in most books and movies always seems to happen to a kick-ass special forces soldier or martial arts expert, but I think a more realistic question to ask is how would a normal citizen react when thrust into a sudden adventure with the stakes being certain death or loss of loved ones? What hidden strengths do we each have inside? How would normal people navigate the razor-sharp line of right and wrong if we have to save the people we love?

Q: You have a lot of weaponry in your novels. Do you have live-fire experience or are you just good at research?

A: A little of both. I was an Air Force officer, so like every other military member I had weapons training. I once got ahold of a mini-gun and a machine gun with grenade launcher, but I accidentally blew up the firing range so they told me never to come back! Just kidding. Actually, I can't talk about any missions I've been on because then I'd have to... Well, you know. ☺ Seriously, though, most novelists are good researchers, especially when writing about futuristic weaponry.

Q: AT series debuted at the height of the civil strife between police and citizens. Was that a coincidence or a message?

A: It was coincidental only in that media coverage of the civil conflict ramped up significantly in 2014. We have to keep in mind, police shootings have been occurring for many years and it's a complicated social problem, especially with the media focusing primarily on white-black shootings.

My concept for American Terrorist came from a real event – my encounter with police in 2007. They accosted me outside my downtown condo in response to a silent alarm at a jewelry store two units away from my condo. It was a flagrant mistaken identity because while they had me on the ground, the owner of the jewelry store was actually carrying merchandise out of the store! I didn't get shot or physically beat up, but what if I had? So for my book I ask the question, what would happen if a law-abiding citizen went berserk or insane after a violent encounter with police or federal agents?

Q: What is your favorite part of writing?

A: My favorite part of writing is holding the finished book (or the Kindle) in my hands. That's the first time I've actually read the whole thing for enjoyment after all the work is done .

Q: If you were to retire tomorrow, which of your books do you want to be remembered for?

A: That's a tough question because I really get attached to all of my hero characters. But if I had to choose, it would be the Raven series because the hero refuses to compromise in his mission to protect children, even though the particular genius child he must protect may actually be the cause of the end of the world. So the hero must choose between saving the child or saving the world. I have more of a micro view of life, so if I were the hero I'd probably save the child.

Q: Who are your favorite authors?

A: I write what I read – mostly escapist action yarns. One of my all-time favorite authors is the late Robert Ludlum, especially the Bourne Identity books. Michael Crichton also wrote some thought-provoking novels that I love. My modern favorites include Matthew Reilly (especially his Scarecrow books) and pretty much anything by James Rollins.