

## AN INTERVIEW WITH

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**Deborah Shlian and Linda Reid,**  
Authors of *Devil Wind*

### **Tell us a little about yourselves. How and when did you start writing?**

We're both physicians and authors.

Deborah wrote poetry and plays in elementary through high school, then worked on her college newspaper before heading off to medical school. While practicing medicine in Los Angeles, she wrote a number of nonfiction books and articles before turning to fiction, using the mystery/thriller genre to tell medically related stories.

Linda has been writing since childhood—her work has been published in the Washington Post, Baltimore Sun, Tribune International, Woman's Day, and the Los Angeles Times. Linda was a staff writer for the TV series "Family Medical Center" and met Deborah at UCLA.

A partnership was born.

### **What inspired you to write *Devil Wind*?**

The complex relationship between fathers and daughters was a natural step for Sammy as she has matured and begun to explore the reasons behind her fear of intimacy and commitment. It also served as a springboard for relating another father-daughter story involving her former nemesis Police Chief Gus Pappajohn.

Living in Los Angeles right before Y2K seemed a perfect backdrop for a story that also deals with how fear can be used to manipulate. The earthshaking events at the turn of the millennium were critical in shaping our future as a country—we wanted to focus on the political upheavals as we transitioned from the complacent dot-com world of the '90s into the era of terror in the '00s, through a "what if" scenario i.e. what if a rogue CIA operative decided to take advantage of the fears of an impending apocalypse to stage a "terrorist attack"?

**How did you use your life experience or professional background to enrich your latest Sammy Greene story?**

While working as a physician in Los Angeles for 25 years, Deborah had a taste of the Hollywood scene working as a medical writer for Dr. Art Ulene of NBC's Today Show and selling a screenplay developed from one of her medical mystery/thrillers.

Linda practiced medicine in D.C. and Los Angeles, and has worked extensively in television and radio in Washington and Hollywood. She brought those experiences to bear to capture a gritty realism in our story. We certainly included experiences from our medical lives at UCLA in our LA Medical Center hospital scenes.

**Is there anything autobiographical in *Devil Wind*?**

As Medical Director of Primary Care for the UCLA Student Health Center, Deborah helped the team develop emergency preparedness for the hospital and clinics. Linda worked as a coordinator for emergency preparedness as Director of the Klotz Student Health Center at Cal State Northridge--in Northridge, CA, site of the devastating 1994 earthquake. These experiences helped to bring a life-like picture of emergency prevention and management procedures common to Southern California. Also, working in hospitals in L.A., we've both dealt with celebrity patients--mirroring the experiences of Dr. Reed Wyndham and his colleagues.

**Are any characters based on people you know?**

Sammy has elements of both Deborah and Linda, but is much more courageous and dynamic than either of us were at her age—or are now. Gus is loosely based on Linda's father, and Reed has elements of Deborah's beloved doctor husband Joel.

**Would you say that *Devil Wind* is more plot driven or character driven?**

Both. *Devil Wind* has an intriguing, fascinating cast of characters and an exciting, well-stitched plot. It's a perfect balance. Also, in our story, Los Angeles itself is an important character and a scenic backdrop for the plot.

**Who is your favorite or most sympathetic character? And why?**

Sammy Greene, of course—advocate for truth and justice, seasoned with love and compassion. She's a soldier for good, but not someone without flaws and vulnerabilities.

### **Who is your least sympathetic character? And why?**

Albert Miller. A soldier for Machiavellian manipulations—willing to sacrifice innocent people to achieve his political aims.

### **What part of writing *Devil Wind* did you find the most challenging?**

Weaving all the threads together. We had several exciting stories scattered across Southern California—getting all the players to meet as the clock strikes midnight December 31, 1999 took planning and coordination. Our characters had to keep moving and so did we.

### **What do you hope that readers will take away from *Devil Wind*?**

Love is all we need. And honor is what we should strive for as a great expression of love. We also hope they'll enjoy seeing Sammy Greene grow and look forward to the next book in the series.

### **How do you dial up the tension to keep your readers on the edge of their seats?**

We're following our characters as they race to save their lives—there's little time to stop and smell the roses—we have to keep up with them, panting all the way. We tend to write in relatively short scenes—just like in a movie—that help to move the plot along faster and keep readers turning the pages.

### **What writers have inspired you?**

Michael Crichton, Robin Cook.

### **What is the writing process like for you?**

We plot the books together in person or by phone then assign scenes. We each write then pass the work back and forth for numerous re-edits. After two books, we have created a third voice that we both write in—or actually, Sammy talks in that voice, and we listen.

### **What is the best piece of advice about writing that you've ever received?**

Write what you know. As humans, we share common emotions and perspectives. If it's real to us, it'll resonate for our readers.

### **What is the worst piece of advice about writing that you've ever received?**

Write what you know. Limiting our imaginations only to our experiences isn't critical. The best writing takes us beyond "what is" to "what if."

**What's next for you? Any new books in the pipeline?**

We're working on book three in the Sammy Greene Thriller series that will take Sammy to Nashville and the Grand Old Opry, as well as to the luscious shores of Greece.

**Any final words you would like to say about yourselves, *Devil Wind*, or life in general?**

We hope readers will enjoy *Devil Wind* and spending a few thrilling days with Sammy Greene and her friends.