

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Don Bruns, author of *Bahama Burnout*

Bahama Burnout is the fifth novel in the Mick Sever series. Over the years, how has the writing process changed?

I know Mick much better. He still surprises me, but I know what baggage he carries. And I think I have a better handle on getting local flavor from the islands that he visits. I like to think that the reader gets a \$4000 vacation for \$24.95.

How do you pick the settings for the Mick Sever novels?

It's as easy as thinking of someplace I'd like to go.

Why did you choose Nassau as the setting for Bahama Burnout?

There's a recording studio there that mirrors the one in the book.

How do you think Mick has changed over the years?

He's learned to deal with some of his insecurities. He isn't relying on his ex-wife. And I've noticed he doesn't have as many intimate relationships as he used to. I'm not sure that's a good thing.

In the past, Mick's ex-wife Ginny has appeared, but is absent in Bahama Burnout. Why?

Ginny has moved on.

How did you get the idea for the characters in Bahama Burnout?

Rock and roll takes its toll. There are a lot of burnouts. Producers, engineers, the musicians. It's a frantic life, and there's a lot of carnage on the side of the road. These are real people who've all been beat up by the system.

What's the significance of the voodoo and superstition? During your research, did you find that the people of the Bahamas are really that superstitious?

There are a number of superstitions in the Bahamas. Spirits and ghosts walk among the living.

Is Bahama Burnout based on a real story?

Yes. This is the first time I ever took a story idea from a reader. Someone told me about a recording studio in Telluride, Colorado that burned down in the seventies. Supposedly there were strange things happening when it was rebuilt. That was the end of the story. It was my job to find out why.

What's your secret to capturing the physical beauty of the islands you write about?

There's no secret. I've always been captivated by scenery. I'll pull over by the side of the road for half an hour and watch a rainbow. And the tropics have their own style, their own color, fragrance, charm and personality. I just write what I see.

What's your fascination with celebrity, and how does this shape your novels?

As a nation we're obsessed with celebrity. We give them a pass on everything—drugs, sex, murder, and they pay no price. I am always interested in getting to the bottom of that story.

Do you think it's better to burn out, or to fade away?

If your goal is to make a statement, then it's better to burn out.

What's next for Don Bruns?

This fall the Stuff series resurfaces with *Stuff to Spy For*. I'm working on a new series about Napa Valley, and a paranormal thriller. If Sever resurfaces he'll be dealing with the paparazzi and a very suspicious death.