

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Don Bruns, author of *St. Barts Breakdown*

Was the process of writing *St. Barts Breakdown* different from writing the other Mick Sever novels, *Jamaica Blue*, *Barbados Heat* and *South Beach Shakedown*, and if yes, how so?

In the Sever novels I find myself more and more getting inside the head of the villain. I think maybe the books are getting a little darker, a little edgier.

Where did you get the idea for Danny Murtz?

There are a number of musicians, singers, songwriters and producers that I used to mold the character of Danny Murtz. Murtz is a perfect example of a very wealthy player who's had too much too soon and believes that the rules don't apply to him. If I mentioned those musicians, singers, songwriters and producers...then I'd be sued.

How do you hope readers will react to Danny Murtz?

I know how I reacted to him. I wanted to strangle him. He's manipulative, bizarre and more than just a little crazy.

What is it like to have a recurring character such as Mick Sever?

I know Sever. I know his spirit, his highs and lows and I am familiar with the baggage he carries with him.

Who is your favorite character in *St. Barts Breakdown*? Least favorite? Why?

Nancy Steiner is Murtz's secretary. She's based on a friend of mine. She puts up with Murtz as does his lawyer, Harvey Schwartz. I don't know how they do it, but I admire them greatly. Of course the main reason they deal with the crazy man is for the money, and there's a lot of money. I don't think they believe he's as nuts as he is.

Although he is regarded as one of the most successful music producers of all time, Danny Murtz has actually "borrowed" a number of his hits. Do you, as a music industry insider, feel this is something that happens more than the average person might suspect?

Oh, it happens all the time. People steal intellectual property and it's almost impossible to get a conviction.

Why did you choose *St. Bart* for the setting of *St. Bart Breakdown*?

St. Barts is in the French West Indies. A little departure from Sever's normal Caribbean haunts.

Mick Sever finds himself in some glorious locations – *St. Barts*, *Jamaica*, *Barbados*, *South Beach*. Do you visit all of the places you write about in the name of research?

Of course I have to visit these locations to bring authenticity to the story. I read books partly to be transported to a time and place I may not have lived in. When I'm finished, I want to feel I know the place, and I assume my readers want the same.

Where is Ginny, Mick's ex-wife?

She doesn't contact me. I'll probably run into her sometime in the near future, but we don't communicate.

What was the hardest part of writing *St. Barts Breakdown*?

Dealing with Danny Murtz and his insane personality.

With the release of your first non-Mick Sever novel, the highly-acclaimed *Stuff to Die For*, you are currently at work on two separate series. What are the unique challenges of writing two distinctly different types of novels?

In the *Stuff* series, I'm writing first person and channeling a 24 year old. Being a writer gives a person a chance to reinvent themselves, and I will admit...being a 24 year old is a stretch. But I love it. Sever gives me the chance to be the lone wolf...on the prowl. I like that too.

What's next for Mick Sever?

Sever in the Bahamas, and a convent full of nuns. I can't say any more.

What's next for Don Bruns?

Another island.