

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Don Bruns, author of *Stuff Dreams Are Made Of*

How did you get the idea for *Stuff Dreams Are Made Of*?

I've always been fascinated with ministers who promote a religion of wealth and prosperity. I am in awe of members of the clergy who have private jets, limousines, and mansions. And there is a specific minister from the South that I patterned the reverend Preston Cashdollar after.

Do you think James Lessor and Skip Moore have changed in any way since their first caper in *Stuff to Die For*, and if yes, how so?

I don't think either of the boys has matured beyond the 8 months to a year that has passed in their life. There's still a certain amount of uncertainty, innocence, and naïveté in their actions, and philosophy.

How long did it take you to write *Stuff Dreams Are Made Of*?

Six months. It's a comfortable write. I am about 25 mentally and I am immature, uncertain, innocent and naïve. So I know these guys.

***Stuff to Die For* received glowing reviews, including comparisons to Mark Twain's *Huck Finn*, Carl Hiaasen, Tim Dorsey and one review proclaiming that you were "simply masterful." Any pressure?**

We got some great reviews. But most of the comments I get from people who have read the book are about the comparison to the Hardy Boys. Readers love the idea of two grown-up Hardy Boys.

Are any of the supporting characters in *Stuff Dreams Are Made Of* based on real people?

No. More than any book I've written, I decided to invent the characters from scratch. There's a character named Daron Styles who I wish I knew. The guy thinks on his feet and is a street hustler. He comes straight from my mind. I look at all kinds of situations that are ripe for rip-offs, and Daron has already 'ripped them off.'

Who is your favorite supporting character in *Stuff Dreams Are Made Of*, and why?

Daron Styles. He's inventive, secretive, and he is able to act on his wiles.

Do you have plans to bring James and Skip back in another book?

This is probably too much information, but I'm thinking about all of those movies and TV shows from the seventies and eighties where a surveillance van is set up outside a suspect's house. The van has tape recorders and video and all kinds of stuff. Well...these guys, Skip and James, finally decide to become private detectives and they invest in all the modern surveillance junk. I can just imagine the crazy situations they could get into with all the modern equipment that's available today.

You currently have two series in the works – the Mick Sever series, and the *Stuff* series. Does the writing process become easier with each book in a series, or does it become more difficult, and why?

It never gets easy. These aren't cookie cutter novels and each situation has its own set of villains, problems, and consequences. You can't just punch the stories out.

Did you have to do any special research for *Stuff Dreams Are Made Of*?

I visited the State Park where the revival meeting takes place. I spent time learning the lay of the land, and the setting is very confining this time. Almost every second of the book takes place in this park where Reverend Preston Cashdollar's tent is erected. When I called the park office and asked if they would consider a revival meeting there, they were ecstatic and encouraged me to book it. I had to explain that it was all in my imagination. If the book is a success, I may decide to have a real tent revival meeting.

What did you enjoy most about writing *Stuff Dreams Are Made Of*?

The project was fun from a character standpoint, but difficult in a philosophical perspective. I was able to talk about some of my religious beliefs and lampoon some of the characters I've been introduced to over the years. Too many people make way too much money in the name of religion. And too many people end up worshiping these people, like Preston Cashdollar, rather than the God that he represents.

What's next for Don Bruns?

As soon as I finish the next Sever novel, a book on managing time, a new series idea I have about Napa Valley, a stand alone called "Replay," and the new Skip and James book, where they invest in all this spy equipment, (maybe "The Coolest Stuff") I'm going to take a short break.