

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Don Bruns, author of *Don't Sweat the Small Stuff*

Tell us a little about yourself, how and when you started writing.

I wrote my first mystery when I was in the fourth grade. I've always been a story teller.

What inspired you to write your novel?

I was fifty years old, with about 400 stories in me. Either I started writing them down, or I just ignored the feeling inside.

How did you use your life experience or professional background to enrich your story?

Everything matters. Names, locations, personalities, situations, everything matters.

Is there anything autobiographical in your novel?

An author is part of every character that he introduces. No matter what he or she tells you, they are a part of that character.

Are any characters based on people you know?

Of course.

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

Every character has equal weight.

What part of writing your book did you find the most challenging?

It's always making the characters 3 dimensional. I want you to like, dislike or despise everyone in the book. If you don't have a feeling about them then I haven't done my job.

What do you hope that readers will take away from your book?

People they care about.

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

I would hope the plot took care of that.

What writers have inspired you?

Dozens. Mike Connelly, Harlen Coben, Elmore Leonard, Lee Child, Vince Vaughn, Franklin Dixon, Sue Grafton, C.J. Box, Mary Stanton, Claudia Bishop, Kent Krueger....

What is the writing process like for you?

Yelling. Telling stories that I am passionately involved in.

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

Write what you know. (But I often write what I don't know.)

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

Write what you know.

Any final words you would like to say about yourself, your novel, or life in general?

Anything that fiction writers put on paper it's already been done. And probably better, worse, and more violent than the writer could ever imagine.