

AN INTERVIEW WITH

Jude Hardin,
Author of *Pocket-47*



Tell us a little about yourself. How and when did you start writing?

I've been doing some sort of creative writing since second grade. I majored in English at the University of Louisville, with an emphasis on creative writing, and I wrote quite a few poems and short stories as a student there. I've always been into music as well, and tried my hand at songwriting for a while.

What inspired you to write *Pocket-47*?

For years and years I said, "someday I'm going to write a novel." When I turned 42, I felt a sense of urgency, like I better get started now if I'm ever going to do this. I wrote one adult mystery and one middle grade mystery before I created the character Nicholas Colt and started working on what eventually would become *Pocket-47*. In the process I got the idea for a Christian militia group called the Harvest Angels, and the storyline evolved from there.

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

I did a gut rehab on a 400 square foot lake cabin back in the 90s, and I lived in that place for 2 years after my divorce. I thought that would make a good setting for a struggling private investigator. I gave him an Airstream camper instead of a cabin. I'm an RN, so I think that background lends authenticity to any scenes dealing with medical issues.

Is there anything autobiographical in *Pocket-47*?

Like Colt, I was always trying to quit smoking. I finally did it January 2008. So Colt is going to be smoke free in book #2.

Are any characters based on people you know?

Not really. If anything, some of them are compilations of people I've known through the years.

Would you say that your novel is more plot driven or character driven?

To me, it's impossible to separate the two, but if I had to choose I would say character driven. Everyone seems to be in love with the character of Nicholas Colt, and I do think he's *a* proactive force in the story.

Who is your favorite or most sympathetic character? Why?

Nicholas Colt. I like that he lives life on his own terms. He's tough, and he doesn't take crap from anyone, but you couldn't ask for a better friend. You know you can count on him to go the distance for you.

Who is your least sympathetic character? Why?

Lucius Strychar. I can't stand people who use God for their own agendas.

What part of writing *Pocket-47* did you find the most challenging?

I would say the editing process. I had never worked directly with a book editor before signing with Oceanview, and was a little surprised that there was still so much work to be done. It's definitely a better book for the effort, though.

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

All I can really hope is that they're entertained for a few hours. If it gets them thinking about hatred and cruelty being bad things, then all the better.

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

I think first you have to make them care about the character. That's key. Then you start thinking about putting this beloved character in some terrible situations where the reader is forced to worry about what's going to happen.

What writers have inspired you?

John D. MacDonald, Robert B. Parker, Stephen King, Dennis Lehane, James Lee Burke, Loren D. Estleman...

What is the writing process like for you?

I don't outline, so when I sit down to write I'm never exactly sure what's going to happen. I like it that way. I figure if I'm surprised maybe the reader will be as well.

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

Never give up. Persistence has always been crucial to success, and this is especially true in today's publishing climate.

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

Never give up. Writing for publication isn't for everyone. If you consistently have doubts about how committed you are to finishing a project—knowing that it might never see print or make you a dime—then maybe your time would be better spent on other pursuits.

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

I'm working on a Nicholas Colt short story right now. I plan to start working on book #2 in the series soon.

Any final words you would like to say about yourself, *Pocket-47*, or life in general?

Just to say thanks to all the wonderful folks at Oceanview for giving me the opportunity to get my book out there. I'm living my dream, and I couldn't be happier.