

In his Preface to *The Third Man*, one of the classic mystery/thrillers of all time, Graham Greene wrote: "*The Third Man* was never intended to be more than raw material for a film ... an entertainment ... to frighten people a little, to make them laugh."

John Grisham, author of *The Client* and many other recent bestsellers that also became top movies, recently told reporters, "I'm not Joyce or Faulkner, and I don't care about that. I'm an entertainer."

I agree with them, that mystery/thrillers should be written primarily as the basis for films, as entertainments.

In his Preface to *From Russia With Love*, another great book and film, Ian Fleming wrote: "Not that it matters, but a great deal of material in this story is true."

I agree with Fleming's approach as well that, as much as possible, material in these books should *be* true and ring true.

Not that it matters here either, but a great deal of material in the Duff stories is also true. They are also intended as entertainments.

M.C.

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Michael Christopher has been a journalist, a newspaper editor, an advertising copywriter, and a creative director. He has also been a long-time student of mystery/thriller novels.

Over the years, he has made a study of the best of the genre: the early mystery writers - Conan Doyle, Raymond Chandler, Dash Hammett, Georges Simenon, Agatha Christie, Dorothy Sayers; the Cold War-era spy masters - LeCarré, Len Deighton, Greene, Fleming, Frederick Forsythe, Ken Follett, Eric Ambler, Trevanian, Tom Clancy; and the current crop - the latter-day Elmore Leonard, Thomas Harris, Grisham, Scott Thurow, and even the manic Janet Evanovitch, to name but a few key writers.

More than simply reading these books, Michael analyzed them to see what made them tick. He broke them down chapter by chapter and learned their structures.

When he later studied Dramatic Script Writing at Humber College in Toronto he found that many of the principles of screenwriting reinforced the structures he had found in the novels: the three acts, the turning points, the mid point, crisis points, the importance of motivation, conflict, inciting incidents, dark moments, the climax, the resolution: all these markers happening when and where they should in the story-line.

After co-writing biographies of two well-known Canadian personalities - both at invitation of the subjects - Michael decided to turn his thoughts to a mystery series as a follow up to those books.

It was time to put his study of the genre into practice.

So, he began rolling around ideas for an original detective character.

He began his research by re-connecting with long-time friend, Jim Byrnes, who was recently retired from the world of investigation. Coming from a long police family and being married to a doctor, Jim was an authority on both police and CS (Crime Scene) matters.

Meeting with Jim on a regular basis, Remy Duff gradually began to take shape. Along the way, magic was incorporated as a novel twist in Duff's bag of tricks and the quirky, colourful undercover cop with the irrepressible personality, a love of beer, and the penchant for spontaneous little displays of magic was born.

To fully develop and define this new hybrid character, Michael decided to complete two full novels, two short stories, and plot out several more novels, samples of which are available on this site. He did this also to hone a suitable prose style for the Duff books, a style that is brisk and unadorned and with an emphasis on dialogue, action and setting, the prerequisites for good film adaptation.

Michael continues to complete Duff stories in progress, and to work on new Duff stories in development.

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