



INTERVIEW

Upclose & Personal

**GARY
SMITH**

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR LATEST BOOK?

My newest book is BETRAYAL. It is a story about young people with hopes and dreams drawn to the entertainment industry to become actors and singers with a record deal to be betrayed and led into prostitution, about writers paying thousands of dollars to companies promising to find them an agent for their manuscript only to take their money. It's about law enforcement, both local and the FBI, that betray their oath, and even a corrupt United States Senator.

But the worst betrayal is the betrayal of oneself. In the book BETRAYAL, Warren Steelgrave is soon in over his head, having been given a hard drive containing evidence that implicates the corruption of many influential people and exposes corruption in the FBI, the international task force, and many in government. There is no one Warren can trust as he is chased all over Europe and the United States, trying to get to court and testify.

HOW DO YOU APPROACH THE PROCESS OF WRITING? DO YOU HAVE A RITUAL?

I am writing. I have to write every day. Production increases each day. First, two hundred words a day, then three hundred words, then five hundred words to a maximum of about nine hundred a day. If I take a break for a day or two, it starts all over again at about two hundred words a day. I do have a ritual. I write at the same time of day in the same spot. A walk-in closet I turned into an office. Jazz playing softly.

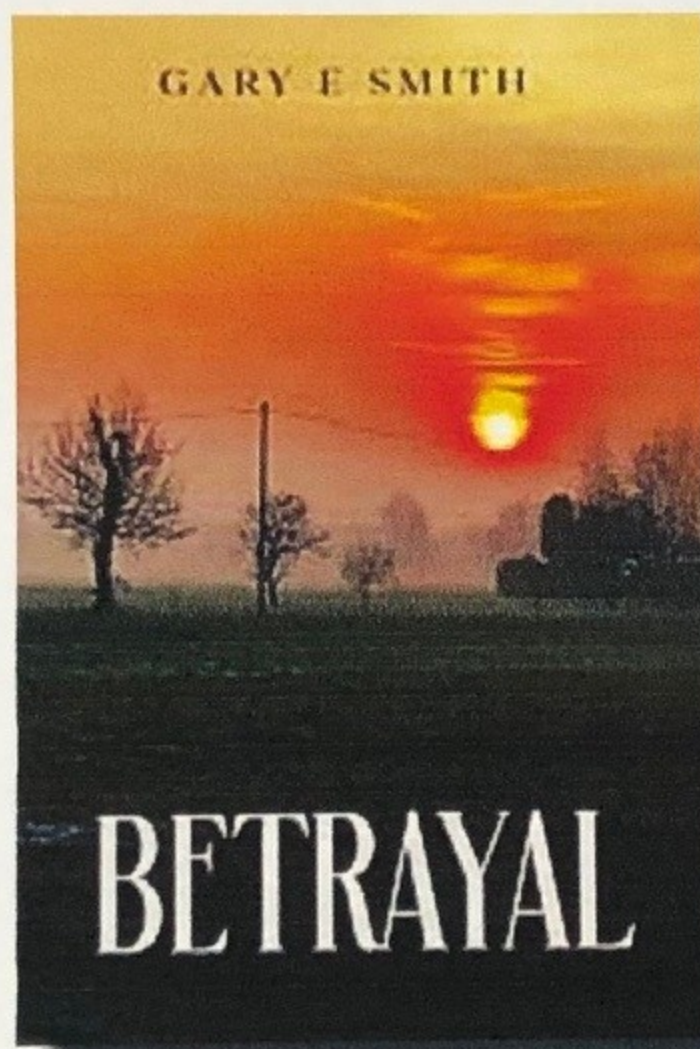
HOW DO YOU CHOOSE THE TITLES FOR YOUR BOOKS, AND HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK TITLES ARE?

I believe titles are very important to attract readers. My titles are always the last thing in my writing process.

Generally, while writing the book, a character says something, or something happens in a scene that triggers the title.

WHAT THEMES OR MESSAGES DO YOU HOPE YOUR READERS WILL TAKE FROM YOUR WORK?

All my work, besides being, I hope, a great mystery has a theme. Whether it's handling love at first sight with a married person or where we got our views on murder. How many times have we allowed considerations to keep us from achieving happiness. My hope is to trigger some introspection.



ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC AUTHORS OR BOOKS THAT HAVE INFLUENCED YOUR WRITING STYLE OR STORYTELLING?

Yes. I draw inspiration from reading about great authors and reading their writings. Ernest Hemingway, James Joyce, Raymond Chandler. Dashiell Hammett, Ezra Pound, and others. Dashiell Hammett wrote only four novels and had writer's block for over thirty years. Reading about their struggle and how they overcame it keeps me focused on my craft. Studying how they used the language and developed characters has helped me greatly.

HOW DO YOU DEVELOP YOUR CHARACTERS?

I don't think about it of use some formula. As I write a scene, a new character will come to mind. It is as if my subconscious knows where the story is going before, I do. It comes up with the character. No doubt from a combination of people from my past.

An example is in my second book, I fellow that has been tailing the main character wants to meet. As I began the scene, he approached. He is not tall and slightly

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overweight, has sharp features in an ill-fitting gray suit, and is mousy looking. Two chapters later, he reappears as someone who can't be trusted.

CAN YOU SHARE INSIGHT INTO YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?

I do not outline a story. Raymond Chandler said when you are in your head, you are not creating. After reading that, I felt more comfortable with my process. For a short story, I will sit and start to write what comes to mind. Novels are different. It starts the same way, but something unresolved in my subconscious soon surfaces. Then, about the third chapter, my characters take over, and the adventure begins. They take off as in a movie with me recording it. I am usually halfway through the last chapter before I know how the story ends.

WHAT CHALLENGES HAVE YOU FACED AS A WRITER?

My biggest challenge in a writing career is that I am dyslexic and gaining the confidence to write. When writing, the word my is almost always by, and the word job is jop, et cetera. So, proofreading and attention span become big problems. Because of my short attention span, I will write several times during the day. My books

have so many mistakes that one proofreader will not find them all. So, four different proofreaders proofread my novels.

I would like to share this advice. Know your weaknesses and embrace them. They are what make you unique. Never use them as an excuse to hold you back from what you want to do. For example, as a child, I rebelled against being told my being dyslexic was a

handicap. I looked up all the great achievers who were dyslexic and saw it as a gift.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE CHARACTER IN YOUR BOOKS?

Yes, Marty. Not much is known about Marty. He appears in all the books except one. All we know is he is about thirty-five, always in black, athletic, and stealthy. He is a freelance fixer working for many organizations. He has stepped out of the shadows in three books and saved Warren Steelgrave. His most extended appearance was in the book "Vengeance Can Be Deadly" off and on over three chapters.

ARE THERE BOOKS OR AUTHORS THAT YOU REVISIT OR RE-READ?

Raymond Chandler. I have read all his novels and short stories many times. The first time for the story. The second time, I know the ending, but I love how he gets us there. I have read them each maybe five times. Each time, I find something different to enjoy. I always re-read "The Long Goodbye" before writing a new novel. I had a friend who felt he needed help with character development. I told him to read Raymond Chandler and pay attention.

Find out more about Gary at:
<https://garysmithauthor.com/>

