

The Interview

In the silent, studio the spotlights created the familiar silhouette of two figures in comfortable armchairs. The control room concluded the countdown to another recording.

“It’s 8pm on a Friday evening,” the voice over stated. “Good Evening ladies and gentlemen and welcome to ‘Meet the Author!’ with Martin Hart.”

The host winked at his guest while the theme music played. The guest took a very deep shaky breath. One of the camera’s showed a red recording light and Martin began his introduction.

“Tonight’s guest is the author of twenty-four murder mysteries, many of which have topped the Times’ Best Seller List for several weeks individually. This year he was awarded the Crime Writers’ Association Diamond Dagger Award for his exceptional contribution to crime writing. Ladies and gentlemen, John Doe!”

The recorded applause rang out and John smiled into the camera.

“Thank you, Martin, it’s a pleasure to be here this evening”.

He tried to sound sincere even though it was really two o’clock on a wet Thursday afternoon.

“I hope you don’t mind if we wander through your whole writing career tonight John as you so rarely give interviews. I’d like to begin by asking, is John Doe actually your real name? If so, it’s highly appropriate for your type of writing.”

“It would be certainly but no I chose the name when my first novel was going through the publishing process. Although, I’ve responded to it for so long now it feels like my real name”

“Yes, your first book, ‘The Windermere Murders’”, Martin picked up a copy and held it for a close-up. “Many authors are called overnight successes many manuscript rejections but, for you it truly was an overnight success I believe?”

John thought back to that amazing day when he opened an email from his agent, heart hammering, mouth dry, the mouse dancing crazily across the screen following his shaking control.

“Yes, I was extremely lucky, several publishers were interested in my first effort and there was a serious auction.”

That feeling of excited anticipation had lasted for the first twelve books before starting to fade gradually until pleasure had become professional writing had become a workaday chore.

“Then of course your second book ‘The Trojan Horse Killer’ was made into an award-winning film.”

John shifted in his seat and reached for the water glass.

“John, I have to ask on behalf of your loyal readership, it’s been two years since your last book. I’m certain writer’s block doesn’t exist so have you got something brewing?”

John took a drink, put down the glass and pointed at the books piled on the table between them.

“In front of you there are twenty-four books containing a body count of 94. I felt as if I’ve been drowning in bodies for so long that the next one would be one corpse too many. But you have given me a great idea”. He turned to the camera “A chat show host is murdered in a local brewery,”

Author's note: The Title chosen was 'One Corpse Too Many' by Ellis Peters. It is the first book in her Brother Cadfael series.