



Nova Scotia Author Graham MacDermott Uses His New Brunswick Childhood Home as a Backdrop for His Debut Novel



Graham MacDermott and Revenge River

By Theresa Blackburn

When Graham MacDermott began writing his book, *Revenge River*, the wooded areas he explored as a child growing up in Plaster Rock became the perfect setting for his crime thriller.

“Dad worked for Fraser Company. He was a woodlands boss. His job, as I remember it, consisted of mostly fishing,” grins MacDermott, “but really he was in charge of all woodland roads and the big lumber camps that used to be there. He’d visit those places and talk to camp bosses, making sure things ran efficiently. The time my brother and I spent with him in the woods really shaped how I looked at the forest.”

His father, Ralph MacDermott, met his wife, Ann McKinley, through her brother. Both men attended the Maritime Forest Ranger School in Fredericton after the war. MacDermott’s father was the president of the first graduating class in 1947. Right after graduation, he got a job surveying what would become the Fundy National Park in Alma, where MacDermott’s mother grew up. The two dated, married, and started a family. A few months after MacDermott was born, they moved to Plaster Rock.

“We lived there until I was 17,” he explains. “We moved when Dad took a job with the Scott Paper Company in New Glasgow. That was 1967.”

MacDermott joined the Royal Canadian Air Force, where he met his wife, Bonnie. When he got out, he became a reporter with the *New Glasgow Evening News*, and then became News Director at CKEC Radio. After he and Bonnie started their own family, MacDermott began to look for better-paying jobs, and ended up at Scott Paper, working as a labourer. He admits pushing

woodchips into a hopper was not the life he envisioned for himself when he was a boy growing up in Plaster Rock.

“I needed to go back to school, so we sold the farm, and I enrolled at McGill.”

When he returned to Nova Scotia, he had an undergraduate degree in English Literature, with a minor in Political Science and a graduate diploma in secondary education. He took a job



MacDermott in 1965, behind his childhood home in Plaster Rock.