


CJ LYONS
THRILLERS
with *Heart*



In This Issue:



SANDRA BROWN
#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

An Exclusive Look
Behind the Scenes
with the
Number One New York
Times Bestseller!

Photograph by Andrew Eccles

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You're Never Alone When Lost in a Good Book



You're Never Alone when
You're Lost in a Good Book
~CJ Lyons

I'm so very excited about this, our first issue of
THRILLERS with *HEART!*

In this issue:

*Welcome from CJ
Lyons

*Feature Article: Behind
the Scenes with Sandra
Brown

*Bonus: Join Our Street
Team Family!

*Coming Next Month

Thank you all for joining in on the fun.

The wonderful thing about sharing good books with friends is that I come away with the titles of more good books to read!

And, if you're like me, you hate being stuck somewhere without a book.

Which is why I'll be hosting giveaways and special programs for you to get FREE reads, including advanced readers' copies of my own books.

More on that later in this issue. For now, sit back and enjoy my exclusive interview with the wonderful Sandra Brown!

As always, *Thanks for reading!*

CJ



Behind the Scenes with Sandra Brown: An Interview with CJ Lyons

CJ: What would you consider the essence of a Thriller with Heart?

Sandra: Essences, plural. In any book those are character and story. You really can't have one without the other. You must develop characters that captivate your reader. Even if your main character is the bad guy, such as the Needle in Ken Follett's *EYE OF THE NEEDLE*, or the Jackal in Frederick Forsythe's *DAY OF THE JACKAL*, the reader must be held in thrall of this individual's

problem and how he/she is going to solve it. Story comes out of his/her attempts to do that, successfully or not.

CJ: Your novels combine a thrilling pace with dark suspense as well as evolving relationships, making them true Thrillers with Heart. How do you juggle and combine these elements?

Sandra: LOL because often when I'm plotting, I'll think: This story would make a great romance if I didn't have to incorporate thriller aspects. Or: This story would make a great thriller if I didn't have to worry about developing the romantic relationship.

The trick is to merge the two, so that both elements are strong and grow out of the story.

At each turn, the protagonists must deal with the terrible trouble confronting them, but that terrible trouble should also dramatically affect the tenuous relationship, either positively or negatively. Combining these two elements does require some juggling, because the actions of the characters must also be logical and plausible. When running for your life, it's impractical to take a time out to make love.

I encourage everyone to read [LOVE IS MURDER](#) (available for pre-order now) It's an anthology of short stories, written by masters of the genre, who seamlessly combine the action of thrillers with the emotional intensity of romantic fiction. Entertaining, as well as a crash course for writers interested in the genre.

CJ: What would you consider to be the hallmark of a Sandra Brown novel? Your unique fingerprint, so to speak.

Sandra: Hmm readers would better answer that question. But if I had to claim a hallmark, it would probably be "the secret." When plotting, I build it in. It's essential. I plant the question in the reader's mind on the first page, if possible. It can be as blatant as "Who done it?" or something much more subtle. And, honestly, subtlety is better. But the question lurks in the back of the reader's mind throughout the book, even if they're not consciously aware that it's there. I love to have a reader say, "I never

saw that coming!" Just when you settle back and think it's over, it isn't.

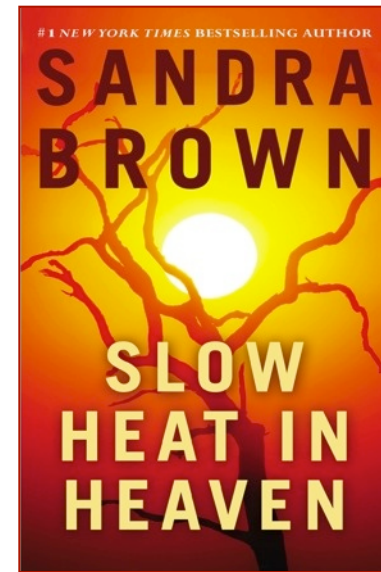
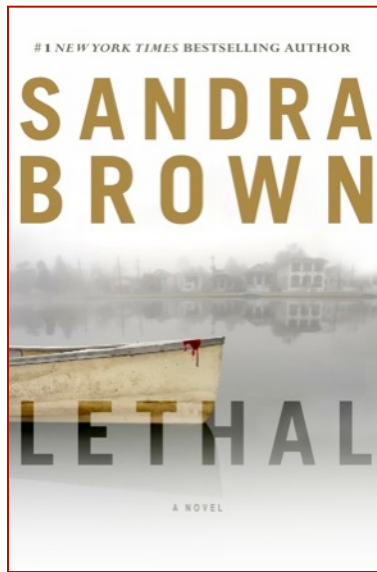
CJ: Which of your books was written under circumstances more memorable than the others? Perhaps during a time in your life where writing was a challenge?

Sandra: My mother, with whom I was extremely close, died of brain cancer. She was incapacitated for eighteen months. During that time, just getting out of bed in the morning was a challenge, to say nothing of writing. But writing was also my salvation. It kept me grounded when I wanted to fly apart.

CJ: You once shared with me a writing ritual you use involving a scented candle to trigger your mind that it's now time to focus on the story. Could you describe your writing process/rituals/work day?

Sandra: LOL. Guilty. I'm a slave to creature comfort! As I'm writing this, there's a vase of roses on my desk and a scented candle burning. French Vanilla Café is in my cup on its little electric warmer. Writing is HARD! I try to make my surroundings as pleasant as possible because only then can I really concentrate.

*I love to have a reader say, "I never saw that coming!"
~Sandra Brown*



CJ: What's your most memorable adventure in research?

Sandra: Two stand out. I interviewed a private pilot only to learn -- during the interview -- that he was a drug dealer who'd just been released from prison after serving a seven year sentence. My contact with him was his brother-in-law. . .who was in my Sunday school class! He left out the drug-dealing part when recommending that I talk to him.

Another time, when I was researching for RICOCHET, my husband and I almost got arrested by heavily armed officers of the Georgia Port Authority for getting under the Talmadge bridge in Savannah and taking pictures of it with a telephoto lens. Those

guys have zero tolerance and no sense of humor!

CJ: What was your favorite fan letter/comment?

Sandra: All those that I receive from service members have dramatic impact. It means a great deal that they take the time to write me, often between life-risking patrols.

Years ago, I received a letter that stays with me. It was from a woman who'd been raped by three male friends, which mirrored the plot of my book BREATH OF SCANDAL. Others have written, telling me that my plot was eerily similar to their experience.

After RAINWATER, I got a lot of email from parents of autistic children, usually to compliment me or to thank me for bringing awareness to autism.

And one letter in particular stands out, mostly because it was so unusual. It came from a middle-aged man who'd picked up, at random, an audio book at a Cracker Barrel to help pass the time during a long drive. It was a romance I'd written in the mid-80s, but it so paralleled his own story, that he had to pull off the highway and weep. He said my story had made him acknowledge something that he had denied for years. His letter brought me to tears.

CJ: You've already accomplished so much, #1 New York Times Bestseller (many times over), award winner, movies made of your books...what do you dream of achieving next in your career? How does it get better?

Sandra: My main goal, is what it's always been, and that's to be able to continue as a storyteller for as long as possible. I celebrate each appearance on the bestseller list, and I'm grateful for each email I get from a "new" reader, one who's just discovered me. Considering the level of competition in the marketplace, I regard acquiring a new fan as an enormous accomplishment.

CJ: What's next for Sandra Brown?

Sandra: Another set of characters and their story. Fingers crossed that it's a good one!

Currently I'm enjoying that LETHAL has become a New York Times bestseller in trade paperback, as well as hardcover, marking a career first.

Also among "firsts," my first "crossover" book from romance to suspense, SLOW HEAT IN HEAVEN, will be re-released in paperback in March from Grand Central Publishing. I thumbed through it the other day and, even though it was written in 1987, I think it holds up well. Love Cash Boudreaux or hate him, readers don't forget him!

Thanks, Sandra, for giving us an insider's view into your world!

Click on over to the Thrillers with Heart site to see Sandra's latest book trailer and to leave comments!

Sandra on Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/AuthorSandraBrown>

Sandra on Twitter: https://twitter.com/#!/SandraBrown_Nyt

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Lee Child

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