

The story behind TOUCHING THE SUN an adventure thriller set in the Bahamas.

<http://maynard-sims.com/bahamas-thrillers>

http://www.worldcastlepublishing.com/author_maynard_sims.html

The book tended to grow organically from the opening chapter. Ironically that first chapter is now not the opening one, as the order of scenes has been changed.

The situation Harry Beck found himself in suggested the direction the plot would go, and after that we let the book develop, often with no clear idea where it was going to end up. The mystery Harry had to solve was as much a puzzle to us as it was to him.

We are firm believers in letting the subconscious do the work and solve the puzzle, and often we can sit down to write with no clear idea of what's going to happen next, and just let it flow. It's only after the plot strands are developed that we put some thought into how they're going to be resolved. Ideas are accepted and rejected, until, finally, the plot is resolved satisfactorily.

Cruelty to children is a subject close to our hearts and one we'd touched upon in an earlier novel. Researching the subject turned up many of the details presented in the novel, all, as far as we can ascertain, horrifyingly true. It's an uncomfortable subject and one that many governments throughout the world have swept under the carpet. Hopefully, the book will have played a small part in making people aware of this ongoing crime against humanity.

We are both parents, and granddads too, so the thought of cruelty to children is unthinkable. Unfortunately there are people who do these things, and hopefully others on the other side who will keep trying to stop them. Evil exists.

We have been writing together a long time now, so we have had plenty of time to iron out the differences. And there certainly were plenty when we began. Arguments over a single word, or phrase, which would be quite heated. The secret, if there is one, is that we have always put the friendship first, and writing second. It could be argued we might have been more successful financially if we were more robust but it has suited us, and kept us human and sane.

We began by one of us writing a story and the other critiquing it. Then the critique became a revision, then a re-write. Eventually it became one writer starting, another completing, or one doing some chapters, and the other doing some. The way it has evolved now is that one writes the book pretty much 100% (sometimes it doesn't work out quite like that) and the other revises, re-structures, adds or subtracts. So one person has the author voice throughout but with enough trust to allow the second to change the voice where needed.

Our writing process used to vary from book to book, but now it's fairly standard. One of us will hatch an idea, and then follow it through to its conclusion. And then there's a long, detailed editing process. Generally, now, the whole book is written by one of us, and the other revises, re-structures, changes a lot or a little as required. There is

enough trust between us that we are no longer precious about “our baby” of a book. It is a joint effort all round and a jointly authored book.

We have had books where one of us has got stuck, and passed the whole project over to the other. Sometimes the book is completed by the second one, and sometimes it just needs a few pages added and then gets handed back to the original author.

Ideas for changes will be suggested and either rejected or accepted. And then the person who gave birth to the story will second draft it to give it a singular voice. It's not a process that will work for everyone, but it hasn't let us down so far.

It helps that we have known each other for decades and there is little in the way of conflicting egos. We agreed a long time ago that writing stories to the best of our abilities was paramount, and the issue of ownership – who came up with the idea and who wrote what – was secondary.

We have written a lot of supernatural books – novels and stories – and it felt time for a change. Not everyone likes horror, and to widen our appeal to a thriller audience is attractive to us. Plus we read a lot of thrillers and crime, and not a lot of horror these days.

TOUCHING THE SUN had its origins in a half-finished thriller novel started over twenty years ago. Only after a few successes with other novels did it feel right to try to finish it. Self-confidence and the ability to get a firm hand on the story and subject matter had improved in that twenty years. The time was right.

All our books are character driven, even the horror ones, and to explore people in a more normal environment – meaning without a supernatural foe – is exciting. Put it this way – since *Touching The Sun* we have written seven more crime and thrillers and just one supernatural book. We have written quite a few ghost stories, but those are a labour of love, and something we have always written.

Projects come from all over. Usually it's an opening chapter that seems to appear fully formed on the page. There are a few non-starters, but if the germ of a good idea is there then it's pursued and developed.

Touching The Sun was so enjoyable that we wanted to explore more of Harry Beck's world. *CALLING DOWN THE LIGHTNING* followed and introduced more characters, and performed that most deadly of series duties - it killed off a main character. Harry was still shouting for more time so *RAGING AGAINST THE STORM* was written.

All three books were bought by World Castle and we hope they will do well as we love them. So much so that a fourth chapter in the series is sure to come out - if we have left enough characters alive that is.

Why set it in the Bahamas? Well one day it might be nice to visit and do some hands on research rather than at a distance. The islands are exotic enough to us to make the setting attractive. The range of the geographical area gives us enough scope for action

and adventure. The different characters that populate our version of the islands gives us sufficient range of plotting.

We love writing. Writing the Harry Beck series has been wonderful.

Here's to many more years of writing.