



DAVID:

The Penance List

BRITISH TRANSPLANT S.C. CUNNINGHAM TALKS ABOUT HER NEW BOOK, HER ARTIST DAUGHTER AND WHAT INSPIRES HER ABOUT DALLAS

By Lauren Kent

Lauren Kent: You are English by birth and still sometimes reside in London. How did you come to be a resident of Dallas?

S.C. Cunningham.: I married a wonderful Texan from the mid cities area. A Brit and an American are a fun mix of discovery. It is also fun to drag my husband around the UK from time to time to let him see the humor, quaintness, loyalties and size of England - being 6'4" from Texas, everything seems so small to him.

LK: Do you find Dallas appealing in the sense of inspiration for your work?

SC: I love vibrant Dallas. Through the excitement of the music, sports, arts, dining, shopping and architecture there is a positive energy that anything is possible. The locals are proud, warm, friendly and inspiring, pulling together through thick and thin, whilst still taking the time to appreciate what they have. I admire their values. Texas has everything, why travel anywhere else. It is mentally and physically a wondrous, open, expansive place to write.

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Scarlett Raven

LK: The Penance List is your first book, and the first in the David trilogy. What inspired you to put pen to paper and make your first work a thriller novel?

SC: From an early age I loved telling stories, entertaining folks, getting valued messages across. I love murder, mystery, suspense and chic lit humor. Ten years ago I started putting pen to paper; I didn't have a choice, it is part of my survival, I have to do it. I have no idea where it all comes from, once you are in the zone the words just come and go to places I never knew existed. Maybe I have a ghost writer, literally! The Penance List is a mix of Silence of the Lambs, Sex and the City and Basic Instinct. A rollercoaster ride thriller splattered with sex and humor.

LK: And you wrote the book with an idea of it becoming a screenplay? How did the vision of seeing the story on the big screen affect the writing process?

SC: I adore movies. I had worked in a sound studio producing music for film, so I now write with film in mind, I have to be able to visualize, taste, smell, breath, live each scene, which I guess makes it easy for film directors to grasp. I have been lucky enough to peak the interest of the talented director David Roddham, producer Matt O'Toole and director of photography Stephen Murphy who share the same visual impact ideas as I (fans of the visionary Blade Runner by Ridley Scott). These hot-shots are making the film into a slick, glossy, shocking Basic Instinct. I guess budgets will decide whether it is shot in the USA or the UK.

LK: On the other side of the coin, you also recently penned a childrens' book about a dog, Joe, called "Ginormous Joe's Broken Bark."

SC: As respite from the blood and gore of the thrillers, I like to write children's picture books with my artist daughter Scarlett Raven (www.scarlettraven.com). We met Joe through SPIN Rescue (Saving Pyrenees in Need www.spinrescue.org) . He was found dying in the streets of Dallas, he was about to give up when the SPIN team scooped him up and nursed him back to health, and now he is a gentle 130-pound bundle of love and white fluff. The books are about him and his charming humorous



look on life. They teach children to respect and take care of animals, to know that good wins over bad, and that love and caring for each other conquers all. A percentage of royalties goes to SPIN so that brave Joe can help save others like him. Joe is fast becoming a hero— he is visiting schools and libraries in the Dallas area (contact www.spinrescue.org for info).

LK: And your daughter is also an artist who did the illustrations for the book?

SC: Yes. I am very proud of my girl, Scarlett Raven. She is being hailed in the British press as the new Vincent van Gogh, Jackson Pollock. She currently has a solo show in London, and a collection ready to show in Dallas—she is talking to the likes of the Goss-Michael Foundation. She adores Joe and taking time out from the studio to work on his books.

For more information, check out sccunningham.com

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Photo of Scarlett Raven by Nadav Kander