

Q& A with D.L. Shiloh

NOVEMBER 22, 2009

HIS NEW NOVEL, HEARING THE WRITER'S SHOT CLOCK AND MORE...

QUESTION: How's it go?

ANSWER: 2009 has been an interesting year. I started a new novel, *Waiting for the End* (<http://www.waitingfortheend.com>), in May. I was going to shoot a movie and a music video but then a health issue - which has held - drained me of money and so just as I started the book, it was easy for me to go with the novel. I was able to sit and that was it. I was off my job for 11 days. That probably had some effect on the book but I haven't reflected on that since.

Q: You've kept the cards close to the vest this time, with the content of the new book.

A: I have to. It isn't finished. You own a book, for a length of time, because in the end you let go of it. Holding on to it for a spell makes it a secret and secrets are good for telling stories.

Q: What's this about a video documentary?

A: When the new book is complete, it makes sense for me to sit down and do a proper video interview – an hour long thing. One half on *Pookoo*, one half on *Waiting*. I am looking forward to it; there are things about the new novel I don't even allude to in my journal, which I use to warm up on or if I have a problem.

Q: How is writing different, now that the 17 years is up and you've got a book in print?

A: I have a license to write. Not literally, not some James Bond thing – just the freedom to do so. I came from a proofreader's POV and it was my one book so I put in so much, packed it into 200 pages [190], a real kitchen sink thing. I can say, 'yep, been there, done that, now what can I accomplish?' It really is freeing me from the shackles. I put everything I could into *Pookoo* and I'm proud of the revised edition and am working toward getting a small press to pick it up as a title, maybe piggy-back it with the next book. I'd be happy for that. But one big difference this time out is I've had extreme focus, since May and it's almost Thanksgiving and that's why the new novel has 53,000 words. *Pookoo's* total was 85,000 words so although there's work to be done, I haven't been turning the manuscript over as a poet-proofreader would.

Hey, I'm 46 years old now and I have to trust that my instincts are right there along with my ability. It's either there or it isn't. I know enough to get this far, so it's a matter of trust.

Q: Does that freedom reflect on the writing?

A: The new character is named Benton and he is very reflective and inward, introverted, and obsessive -

Q: Your characters have that trait -

A: Yes, obsessive is one of the hallmarks. That's the proofreader in me, the guy who proofread grocery lists. I was such a bastard. Benton's is introverted but around a whole array of extroverted people so as much as it is an internal journey, there's plenty that is not. To go back to trust, it fits in with hearing the clock shot in one's head.

Q: Clock shot?

A: At 17 years a book, I wouldn't output that many more. So I've heard the clock shot and need to move along. The good news is that over that 17 year period I wasn't frozen in ice; I was creating, planning.

Q: How many things do you have in mind?

A: I actually skipped ahead after *Pookoo* and went to Book No. 3, *Waiting for the End*. The second in order, as I saw it, was *The Pilgrim Commuter* (<http://www.thepilgrimcommuter.com>). *Pilgrim* has maybe 10,000 words so far and the plot is there. I found it really close to the bone and uncomfortable to write at that point. It was easier to write a 9-11 novel, which is tangentially what *Waiting* is. It might be more appropriate to call it a grief novel. I've wondered lately what would be best, novels or screenplays. My fourth book probably won't be a book, I'll keep it as a screenplay. So I'm leaving it open that after I complete *Waiting*, I'll go back to the next draft of *Singed*. That was the movie we were wanting to shoot last winter. Michael Marius Massett, a Chicago actor, would be brilliant in the co-lead.

Q: So far, grief's been another hallmark.

A: Absolutely. I wanted to always a sarcastic book of poetry called *Sunshine + Flowers* because i wasn't writing that. I want to get things on the tarmac to where I'm releasing a new book every year or so. Stay ahead of it, so when that new one comes around, fans get something for their time.

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