

Chiropractor's Legal Thriller Hits Bookstores

Editorial Staff

False Accusations was hailed by one critic as "A compelling read that rivals Crichton, Cornwell, and Turow -- you won't put this one down till the end."

Alan Jacobson, DC: "A novel is a dynamic entity, just like the body."

From the time when he was relieved of migraine headaches by chiropractic adjustments when he was 14, Alan Jacobson knew he wanted to be a chiropractor. After receiving a bachelor's degree in English from Queens College of the City University of New York, he moved on to chiropractic college, graduating from Palmer West in 1985.

Dr. Jacobson was in the midst of a promising chiropractic career in Northern California when he suffered a serious wrist injury that forced him in 1994 to give up the practice he loved so much. Since that time, he has found comfort in another passion -- fiction writing. He has penned three novels and has a fourth one on the way.

Dr. Jacobson's latest opus is the legal thriller, False Accusations, which hit the bookstands nationally this past December. DC recently ask the author about his new novel and a little bit about himself:

DC: Can you give us a brief description of the plot of False Accusations?

AJ: False Accusations is a suspense fiction novel set in present day Northern California. It involves a psychotic ex-employee's successful attempts at destroying an acclaimed orthopedic surgeon's career and family. While answering the false accusations she's leveled against him, the physician is arrested for a horrific double murder ... and his claims of a frame-up are ignored. His once idyllic life is a shambles as he struggles to fight for his innocence. Forensics play a key role in the story, as does the legal wrangling.

False Accusations was written to have broad, mass appeal. It can be read on several levels: either as a straightforward mystery/suspense, or as something provoking deeper thought relative to our criminal justice system and how it functions -- or doesn't function. Perhaps most disturbing is how easy it is to deceive and mislead authorities using the very tools they rely on to uncover the truth. The book highlights the fact that every one of us is a potential victim of not only false accusations, but of the weaknesses of a judicial system that's supposed to protect our basic rights.

DC: When did you begin writing False Accusations, and how long did it take to finish the novel?

AJ: I believe I started working on it nearly four years ago. Usually, I'll get an idea and write out a series of "what if" questions that lead to about a one-page collection of thoughts and possible paths for the story. I then continue to work on that over a period of months while I'm finishing the book I'm working on. That way, when I finish one book, I'm ready to begin working on the next one.

For False Accusations, once I plotted out the story, I had to perform a great deal of research because of the highly technical nature of some aspects of the book, particularly the forensics, the

legal issues, and the criminal procedure code of California law. I had to learn how to construct and present both sides of a case: prosecution and defense. Once I had all the information assembled, I began writing the book. Even then, at times I'd have to stop and make more calls or set up visits with professionals in that field to fill in information to questions that arose once I got further into the plot. And of course, once it was done, I had to give it to those professionals to review for accuracy.

A novel is a dynamic entity, just like the body. You can plan and plot all you want, but suddenly you realize you've got a problem -- or what's better, a more effective way of handling a plot point -- and you restructure your story. It's not unlike modifying your treatment plan if you find that something isn't working as quickly or as well as you'd anticipated.

DC: What was the inspiration behind the book?

AJ: I'd read an article in the newspaper about a therapist who had, during a counseling session, performed a regressive memory exercise with his female patient. As a result of this therapy, he determined that the woman's father had "possibly" abused her as a child. The father denied the accusations, but he was arrested, he lost his job, his wife divorced him and his daughter would have nothing more to do with him. It was later determined that he was likely telling the truth, but irreparable damage had been done. I started thinking, what would it be like an extremely successful man crossed paths with a psychologically unbalanced person bent on destroying his life and career? How would he defend himself? What would the law do? Would the law protect him from such false accusations? Would others be able to sift through the evidence and find out the truth? I ran with the concept and the result was *False Accusations*.

DC: What is your background?

AJ: I'd wanted to be a chiropractor since I was 14, when chiropractic care accomplished what allopathic treatment couldn't: it cured my migraine headaches. I knew then what I wanted to do with the rest of my life. Also around this time, I had an incredible junior high teacher who turned me on to English. When I entered college, I enrolled in the pre-med program, but graduated with a bachelor's degree in English. I attended Palmer West and graduated in 1985. I practiced until 1994, when a wrist injury forced me out of practice. The natural thing for me to do was to fall back on my English training.

DC: What was the transition like going from being a chiropractor to being a writer?

AJ: The transition wasn't easy. Chiropractic was so much a part of me that it was a good part of my identity as an individual. Unfortunately, as careers, writing and chiropractic are extremely different. In practice, I had constant ongoing stimulation from patients day-in and day-out. With writing, I'm locked in a room alone for 8-10 hours a day. In practice, I'd get instant gratification. I'd treat patients who would instantly feel better, which made me feel good. In writing, I may not get any positive feedback for years: about the most delayed form of gratification as you can get. In addition, I went from being at the top of my field to starting over again, at the bottom of a new one. But with time, I learned how to cope.

I still miss practice, and some days are worse than others, but I've come to accept my new role and identity. Seeing *False Accusations* hit the stores sure helps.

DC: Do you have another book in the works?

AJ: I'm actually on my fourth novel right now. I've written (and rewritten) two other novels that I'm very excited about, but time will tell what happens with those. My agent is currently submitting my

third book to publishers, so hopefully it'll sell.

DC: Other than you having been a chiropractor, is there anything in *False Accusations* that chiropractors in particular might relate to?

AJ: Aside from the fact that chiropractors like a good mystery-suspense novel as much as the rest of the population, the main character is an orthopedic surgeon who stands to lose the good will and reputation that he's worked so hard to build if the rumors and false accusations against him are spread. I think it's something as doctors we all can relate to -- reputation and good will are vital to our success. In fact, it's actually kind of scary to think how easy it is for one of our patients to manufacture a case against us. With sexual harassment a prominent issue facing all kinds of doctors -- particularly those of us who put our hands on our patient's bodies -- I'd think *False Accusations* would hit close to home for a lot of chiropractors. And yes, chiropractic is mentioned in the book. As an aside, while the main character is an MD, it'll be obvious to those who read the book why I didn't make him a DC.

DC: Is there a favorite author or genre you like to read? Did you pattern your work after anyone else?

AJ: I try to read as much as possible; finding time is the challenge. I find some authors very stimulating to my creativity. Steve Martini used to make me sometimes run to the keyboard no matter what time of night it was. Dean Koontz and Nelson DeMille are wonderful writers. I've enjoyed Patricia Cornwell and Robert Ludlum and the early works of Stephen King. I try to read what I'm writing at the time. For example, I've been writing medical thrillers so I'm trying to read medical thrillers. While writing *False Accusations*, I read primarily legal thrillers.

DC: What's the general opinion of your book so far? What have the critics said about it?

AJ: They've been very positive. One reviewer compared it to Crichton, Cornwell and Turow, and the other considered it "a gripping, fast-paced thriller."

DC: Will you be doing any signings or book readings for *False Accusations*?

AJ: Yes. I'm currently working with my publisher on setting these up throughout L.A., Sacramento, San Francisco, Arizona, Seattle, and probably New York as well. *False Accusations* will be available starting the first week in December from any bookstore in the world. It's also available on the web at Amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com.

If DCs want to order it in quantity, I can arrange for a 40% discount. Anyone interested can e-mail me at fictiondoctor-worldnet.att.net and visit my website (which includes information on chiropractic) at <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Parthenon/5676>.

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