

Scott Author Q&A

Q: What is the significance of the title?

My coauthor thought my original title was a bit too low-key, so we batted around ideas until we arrived at Blood on the Blue Ridge.

Q: Where did the idea from the book come from?

A: As you probably know, I host a podcast called The Felon File. I've recorded somewhere north of 250 episodes and some of the stories just stayed with me.

Q: How would you describe working with your coauthor?

A: It's an amiable working partnership. As an editor, he's likely to revise a chapter multiple times. As a former journalist, he's an obsessive researcher, never happy with a single source. Halfway through the project, I started calling him "the Department of Corrections."

Q: What experiences did you bring to the book, and how did they help shape it?

A: I've been involved in law enforcement for 33 years. At some point, you tend to think that you've seen and heard it all. Shortly thereafter, you find yourself talking to a witness or suspect and saying, "Do what?"

Q: What was the biggest surprise you had working on the book?

A: Some of the chapters needed far more "detective" work than you would think, particularly The Nearly Fatal Footprint, The Unconquerable Nancy Franklin, and A Deadly Reunion at Runion. Some of the newspaper articles were incomplete or contradictory. We were fortunate to get documents and leads from state archives, local genealogy experts, and librarians.

Q: What was the most challenging chapter to write?

A: Definitely the Nancy Franklin chapter; the Shelton Laurel massacre is the most important event in Madison County history. If you get the facts wrong or fail to treat the subject with respect and compassion, to quote Thomas Wolfe, "you can't go home again."

Q: What was the most straightforward chapter to write?

A: The freighthopping chapter was fun to write. It was mostly about adolescents doing stupid stuff and hopefully not losing a limb in the process. Although, some grown men got into the act as well.

Q: Does the book have a theme or themes?

A: What we were hoping to do was take people back in time and show them how crime, punishment, and the courts worked back then. There have always been crimes, and there have always been people trying to solve them.

Q: How did you research the book?

A: That might be a better question for Alfred. We started with newspapers and North Carolina Supreme Court summaries, then looked further afield if things weren't clear. Librarians are your friends.

Q: Where do the stories take place?

A: About half the chapters take place in or involve Madison County. A good amount takes place in Asheville and Buncombe County, and some of the crimes and criminals took us throughout the Blue Ridge region into Tennessee, South Carolina, Virginia, and West Virginia.