

Interview Questions from Pink Slips author, Beth Aldrich

What inspired you to write your book?

While reading Jerry Cleaver's book, *Immediate Fiction*, one of the writing prompts in the book triggered a memory I had about an obscene phone call I received one evening. That phone call was nothing like what my protagonist experienced, but the story just bounded out of me, just from my recall of that scary incident. My two Tibetan Terrier dogs, and my mom's dog, Bailey, also were the inspiration for my lovable Barney, who's a key character in the book. Betsy is, in some ways, like me. But, I'm not going to tell you how ;)

Do you have a specific writing style?

I really enjoy writing in first person, present. It really draws the reader IN to the story, as if they are right there with my characters, living and experiencing it, close-up and personal.

How did you come up with the title?

When I used to publish my magazine, I was quick at coming up with headlines and catch phrases, so when I thought about anonymous notes, I thought... slips of paper...women's fiction...PINK. "How about Pink Slips?" I was told folks would think about getting a "pink slip" from a job, but I knew readers would be savvy enough to read the back cover and discover that I was using a play on words.

What books have most influenced your life most?

I love anything James Patterson writes but my first love of reading suspense thrillers began one day when I was walking through an airport (when I was a flight attendant for Delta Airlines) and the book, *Lightening*, by Dean Koontz, caught my eye in the bookstore. I was held hostage for hours, unable to put the book down. Once devoured, I went on to purchase every Koontz book I could get my hands on. And, as a single woman, living on a modest income, those books were true investments in entertaining my brain. He got me through plenty of flight layovers and delays. Thanks, Dean!

Do you have any advice for other writers?

Just quiet your mind and listen to the people talking inside. Everyone dreams, daydreams, or thinks of funny/scary stories, so if you can capture those characters and displace them on the page, you'll have quite interesting stories. I suggest that newer writers invest in the many wonderful courses that Writer's Digest University online offers. I received amazing advice from agents who hosted online courses, where in turn, my writing grew, evolved, and became clearer. Garner feedback and advice from anyone and anywhere. I also suggest printing out chapters and read them out loud. It's quite helpful to hear your words. Oftentimes, we fill in blanks from the story, in our mind when we type and silently read, and usually miss typos and story gaps. I worked with an agent for my non-fiction book, but for some reason, I really wanted to try my hand at Indie publishing. I've learned rather quickly that you MUST research the marketing aspect of book selling to have a successful book launch. Read everything you can get your hand on, network with other Indie writers, and be open to editing many times over-and-over again.

What books/authors have influenced your writing?

I love Dean Koontz, James Patterson, and for my new book (Holiday 2017), I adore anything from Debbie Macomber. In fact, Debbie was a guest on my radio show a few years ago. She is nicer in person than you can ever imagine!

What genre do you consider your book(s)?

I've written a non-fiction healthy living and cookbook (I'm a certified health counselor), my debut novel is a suspense thriller (Pink Slips), and the next two books I'm currently writing are a cozy suspense book, and a domestic suspense story. I have many stories in my head so for right now, I'm bouncing in between suspense and cozy.

Do you ever experience writer's block?

I have not yet experienced writer's block because I usually dream or daydream about my stories for days or even weeks before I write them. I even tell my close friends about a story I'm "writing", explaining small details and elements, so by the time I sit down to write, I plunk away, not able to even keep up with the words whizzing through my head. If, for some reason I get stuck with something I'm working on, I jump over to another story in my mind. Or, I will re-read and edit a short story that previously wrote.

Have you ever hated something you wrote?

I've never really hated anything, but sometimes upon re-reading something, I'll say, "That doesn't make sense, or what the..." I then, just copy/paste and chop until I get it right. Nothing is ever perfect, but it's fun trying.

What is your favourite theme/genre to write about?

Currently, I'm really loving my cozy suspense holiday story that I'm working on. I love the idea of angels and couldn't resist creating a lovely story that will melt your heart. Plus, I HAD to get Pink Slips out of my head, but I was kinda freaked out after I read what I wrote. I never realized how scared I must've been after that "real life" scary call that I received, which inspired the story. I'm not sure suspense thrillers are my favorite, but right now I think I nailed with Pink Slips. I hope the readers enjoy it.

Where did your love of writing come from?

I've always enjoyed being creative, from producing my own TV series and magazine, to designing and building our home, but studying journalism in college helped give me a strong writing foundation. I love how the words flow from my thoughts to my fingers, and I truly believe it comes from something deep inside, or from above.

What was the hardest part of writing this book?

All of the advice I received was to write, write, write; and not edit along the way. For me, going back over and over to edit and fix was the hardest part. I'm very picky and am considered a perfectionist, so I'm going to clean things up along the way on my current cozy novel. I'll let you know how that pans out! Every book requires many rounds of good edits, so I'm sure it's unavoidable. It's also hard to accept editor's corrections and changes, but a mature writer will swallow the pill if they want to progress and learn.

What did you enjoy most about writing this book?

I loved re-reading chapters and really getting to know my characters. I felt as though I spent more time with Betsy Ryan, during the process, than I did with my family. She has become a part of my family and will always be welcome. :) I also really loved working with the talented editors, formatter, and cover designer. I would get butterflies when I'd see their email in my box... excited to see what they came up with. I was also really thrilled to work on the audio version of the book, which I'm hoping will launch soon, too.

Do you write every single day?

I do write almost every single day, unless I have family plans, travel, or other events. I really love sitting with my laptop, flowing my fingers across the keys. It feels good to say things and to have the power to correct, edit, and create, at will. Very empowering.

What are you working on at the minute?

I'm currently working on lengthening a short story, a holiday cozy novel, and another suspense domestic thriller.