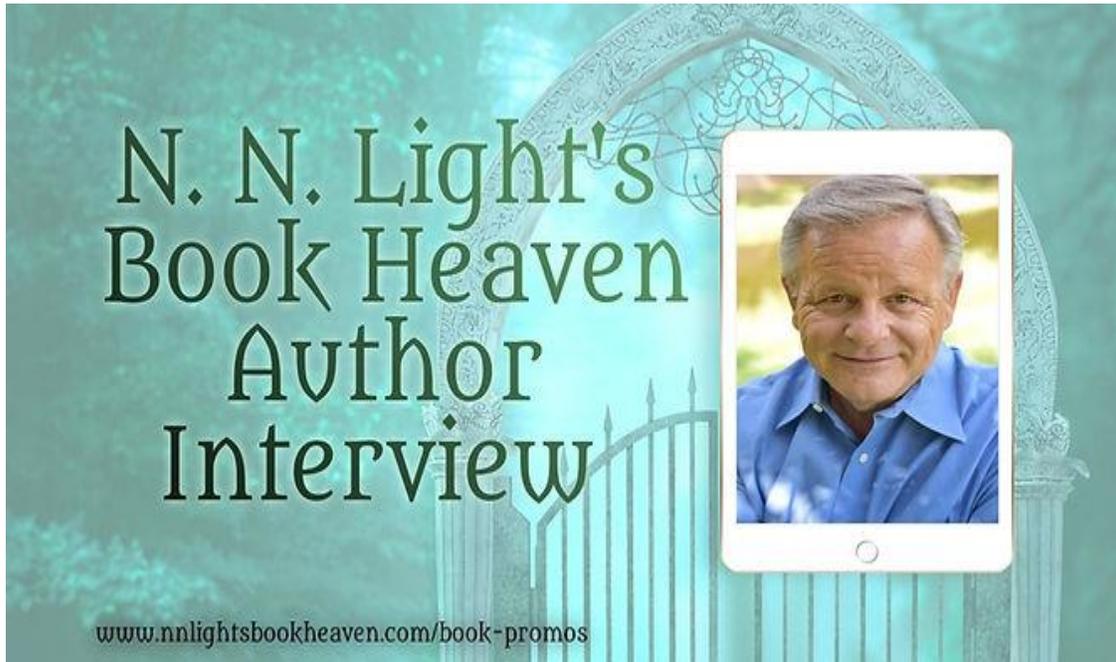

Author Interview | Meet @KevinKuhens and his pulse-pounding thriller *Terror's Sword*



We meet authors from all walks of life and experiences. When I first met Kevin, he wanted to take part in one of our events. He was so gracious and open to suggestions. The more I got to know him, the more I wanted to interview him. I asked and he agreed. So, grab your favorite beverage and join us. Kevin, take it away...

Just as your books inspire authors, what authors have inspired you?

Definitely Steve Berry. He's the author of over two dozen historical thrillers with unique plots, colorful characters, and dialogue. His characters hit the high notes in every line with entertaining, informative, compelling dialogue that drives the story forward. I met Steve Berry at a book fair in Jacksonville, FL, around the time he published his incredible first novel, *The Amber Room*. When the doors opened, few people had arrived, so I approached Steve and told him I had recently decided to write my first thriller. He graciously shared his experiences with me. The gist was to

expect rejection—lots of it, frustration, and many other challenges and roadblocks that would make me wonder whether to continue writing. However, the most important thing he shared was do not quit, keep writing, and never give up. Do what is necessary to satisfy your urge to write. While our exchange lasted only a few minutes, his words stuck with me. Nelson DeMille and a few other excellent authors have influenced my writing too, but I give Berry the tip of the hat.

What writing advice do you have for other aspiring authors?

I'm a relative "rookie" as far as accomplished authors go, so sage advice from me is driven mainly by what I've learned from gifted authors. If I narrowed my advice for aspiring writers down to a single sound bite, it would be the same counsel that Steve Berry gave me: never give up, roll with the punches, and keep going. Few of us will be as successful as him, but we should never quit trying.

What is your writing process?

I'm an early riser and have been all my working life, though my 4:30 a.m. wakeups have slipped to 6:00 a.m. I'm generally at my desk by 8:00 and spend the first four hours dedicated to writing or editing. Then I break for lunch. Depending on where I am with my current project, I'll spend an hour addressing marketing issues or a couple of hours in the afternoon conducting research. For me, exceeding 7 hours singularly focused on the project can be counter-productive, with a notable exception. When I find myself in the "zone" writing, I must capture it all—everything else goes by the wayside. I am fortunate to live in an area with one of America's most incredible beaches. I often take advantage of the solitude it provides to recharge my batteries and reboot the computer residing above my shoulders.

If you could cast your characters in the Hollywood adaptation of your book, who would play your characters?

For many of *Terror's Sword's* leading roles, I'd like to see a strong cast of up-and-coming actors who can portray forceful people with the backbone to do what's right regardless of the consequences. I need to describe a little bit about my main characters to answer your question effectively.

Protagonist. US counterterrorism case officer Kyle McEwan is the deadly weapon—albeit a human one—every American hopes the government has in its arsenal to

protect freedom and liberty. The reader quickly sees that McEwan is a psychological case study in both positive and negative identities. McEwan is the dedicated, hard-working man of integrity and conviction you want by your side because he takes care of business decisively. The “other” McEwan is not the guy you want to find standing outside your window looking in. With a simple flip of the switch, he becomes a frightening lethal, predatory operative. For him, political ramifications are irrelevant; the mission is paramount. McEwan’s utter intolerance of bureaucracy and dishonest, self-serving officials places him at odds with his politically motivated superiors and others in the deep state, leading to some captivating interactions.

I believe an actor who could play McEwan is Luke Grimes, of *Yellowstone* fame, who also played a Navy SEAL in the movie *American Sniper*. I think both roles demonstrate Grimes has the chops to play a moral man who can come out of the shadows when necessary.

Antagonist. Kyle McEwan and terror mastermind Ali bin al-Dosari are two deadly weapons barreling toward each other, their collision a fait accompli, time and location to be determined. While al-Dosari is the polar opposite of McEwan, he’s equally dedicated and focused on his mission. A brilliant, charismatic man, al-Dosari just happens to be a psychopathic mass-murdering megalomaniac. I see actor Manuel García-Rulfo as al-Dosari. He burst onto the scene recently in two television series, *Goliath* and *The Lincoln Lawyer*.

Director of National Intelligence Daniela Sanchez. The beautiful and accomplished Danni Sanchez has one of the most complicated and challenging roles in *Terror’s Sword*. Sanchez runs herd on the strong-willed McEwan as he resolutely stalks the terror mastermind across three continents and the US. At the same time, Sanchez must go toe-to-toe with the directors of the CIA, FBI, and other deep state factions. I see Gal Gadot of *Wonder Woman* and *Death of the Nile* fame in this role.

US President Nelson Englewood. Nick Searcy, a talented actor with many roles, including the popular television series *Justified*, would be outstanding as Englewood. He possesses the demeanor of a courtly southern gentleman with a rare commodity among politicians: he’s bluntly honest.

Several other fascinating characters in *Terror's Sword* are worth mentioning, but we'll let the readers learn who they are and determine for themselves which actors should fill the roles in *Terror's Sword* the movie.

How important are names to you in your books? Do you choose the names based on liking the way it sounds or the meaning?

Both. Names are important, and they paint images, intentionally or unintentionally. For example, a lethal operative cannot be named Don Duck. I give a lot of thought to meshing a name with a character's personality and physical attributes. It helps me to visualize an actual person who may resemble the character in appearance and disposition. For instance, in creating US Marine Corps Raider Jason Cartwright in *Terror's Sword*, I imagined the late actor Michael Clark Duncan, a larger-than-life personality. I selected Cartwright's name to fit the sum of his physical features and individual qualities, which bore some semblance to Duncan.

What do you consider to be your best accomplishment?

Writing a novel from scratch that people enjoy reading. I always believed I was creative enough to write a book, but I wondered if I had the skills to take it from ground zero to completion. It took a while for me to answer that question.

Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

I want to have finished my next three Kyle McEwan thrillers and working on number five. Maybe even sitting back and watching one of them on TV or in a movie theater. Or at least sitting at the beach cogitating it all.

What is your least favorite part of the publishing/writing process?

Several time-crunching activities prevent me from writing if I don't manage my time effectively. As an indie author, you do not have a publishing house or professional staff managing the many facets of bringing your work to print or guiding you in accomplishing those tasks—the list is exhaustive. I've found promotion and marketing to be especially challenging. It *is* a critical component of the writing process but can be a time gobbler, overwhelming, frustrating, and not entirely successful despite your best efforts. While self-publishing has been a boon to indie authors, the marketing aspect has not become easier.

What is your best marketing tip?

Research and create an author's marketing plan; there are many resources out there to assist the indie author. Carve time out of your schedule to address marketing and promotional opportunities. Above all, don't forget local sources like indie bookstores, newspapers, book clubs, and magazines.

What do you want your tombstone to say?

"A good man who always did what was right regardless of the consequences"

If you had a superpower, what would it be?

I would most definitely add more hours to every day.

Thank you, Kevin, for the insightful interview. I thoroughly enjoyed getting to know you better.

September 22, 2022

N. N. Light's Book Heaven Author Interview (Canada)
<https://www.nnlightsbookheaven.com/post/kevin-kuhens-ai>
