

Real Africa Shown In Fiction

(West Harrison, NY) Fiction blends with reality in *Heart of Diamonds*, a newly-released high-concept thriller about diamond smuggling and civil war in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Author Dave Donelson says he set the book in the DRC in part because there are few such places on earth where action and adventure are daily events.

“I write about fictional characters in real situations,” Donelson says. “That approach heightens the excitement for the reader and sweeps them into the plot.”

The book’s intricate story implicates an American televangelist, the President of the DRC, and the White House in a diamond smuggling scheme that leads to U.S. military involvement in the Congo’s civil war. TV journalist Valerie Grey uncovers the conspiracy and tries to expose it before America is drawn fully into the endless war. Powerful forces—a ruthless mercenary, the Congolese army, and cold-blooded agents sent by the White House—try to stop her in a magnificent chase along crocodile-infested rivers, overland through raging gun battles, and into the sky in armed helicopters. One Amazon reviewer said, “There’s enough sometimes-bloody action and intense suspense to please the most demanding thriller addict.”

Donelson is a freelance writer and photographer whose byline has appeared in publications as diverse as *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Westchester Magazine*, and *Disney’s FamilyFun*. *Heart of Diamonds* is his third book, but the West Harrison, NY, author’s first foray into the thriller genre. “I wanted to write something that captures the vibrancy and complexity of Africa, and a suspenseful adventure framed against the endless war in the DRC seemed like the perfect approach,” he says.

“*Heart of Diamonds* is a work of fiction,” Donelson avers, “But it is based on actual events in the most deadly conflict since World War II.” The author says he drew heavily on news accounts of rape as a weapon of terror, child soldiers, widespread corruption at all levels of government, and the very sad plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees from the violence that continues to wrack the nation.

“My wife, Nora, and I traveled to Africa twice to research the book,” Donelson explains. “As a journalist, I’m a stickler for detail. Seeing the landscape and meeting the people in person was the only way to achieve the level of authenticity I want.” He adds that he took thousands of photographs in Uganda and Zambia, many of which are used as graphic chapter headings in the book.

Heart of Diamonds was published by Kunati Books, named Independent Publisher of the Year at the 2008 Book Expo America.

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