

Q and A with Michael Mehas

Did Michael Jackson help Jesse James Hollywood's cause?

I don't know that he helped him intentionally, but it's no secret that Michael Jackson is no fan of the Santa Barbara County District Attorney's office. The former prosecutor on the Hollywood case was the main trial attorney when they prosecuted Michael Jackson for child molestation. I was still getting information from Ron Zonen at the time, and we used to talk about it. We both knew he was in for quite a battle with Jackson's stable of high-priced lawyers, but he felt confident with his position. He told me he thought he was going to win. So when the King of Pop ended up getting off, I think it took something out of Ron. And I think it kind of deflated their whole office. And that was right about the time Jesse Hollywood got caught. So Zonen hadn't really shifted his energies back into the Hollywood case yet. And when Blatt smacked him with that motion that would eventually knock Zonen off the case for the work he did with me, I think it had totally caught him off guard. He was still licking his wounds from the Jackson battle. So yeah, indirectly, I think Michael Jackson did help Jesse Hollywood out.

What's the most important thing about writing?

To me, it's truth in character – just like in real life. Without that, you have no story. The telling rings hollow, your characters read thin, and readers will recognize that. To write truthful characters, you have to understand what truthful character is. You have to understand how people in real life operate. The cause and effect relationship we have with the universe around us; how we react to our surroundings. And how that applies to the different types of personalities that populate our stories. Until you learn that give and take in life, until you appreciate the dynamics of motivation and response in your daily activities, your characters will continue to ring hollow.

Why is the death penalty wrong?

Because it makes us think about killing living things. We need to think about love and joy. We need to think about healing others through compassion and tolerance. We are what we think. So if we're always thinking about bad things – having bad thoughts – we'll then create this bad reality around us. Just look at what's happening around the world now. Look what happened in *Stolen Boy*. I mean if we stopped to take a close look at what we've created around us, we might be appalled at ourselves. And then what if we try to reverse all that? What if we suddenly find ourselves actually in agreement about something? And we all come together, and start thinking positively? What if we all start having loving, compassionate thoughts about everyone else at the same time? That would probably help create a lot of beauty for all of us. It would be like the ripple effect in a pond; it will spread everywhere. That's how we can make real change. And we better get going because we really don't have much time left.

What do you hope to accomplish with *Stolen Boy*?

Somebody once told me that life is something that happens while we're busy making plans. I guess that's what happened to me. I learned about life in the middle of all this chaos that surrounded me. I learned how important it is to love and respect yourself if you want others to love and respect you as well. A lot of writers suffer from this insecurity and self-loathing. A lot of lawyers do as well. We could all probably use a good lesson on how to love and appreciate everything we've got. To recognize that whatever we experience in life, we brought upon ourselves. And that if we want to, we have the power to change that reality right now. And we can use that power to heal ourselves. We are all interconnected like cells to a higher body. And if we can learn how to heal ourselves – the dying cells of our greater body – we will thrive as a race.

