

On Writing  
**Code Name: Purple Fire**  
Special Ops Series  
# 1  
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The morning sun rose along the distant horizon, illuminating the sea with a blush of purple fire. Abbie jogged along the beach, the silky touch of soft white sands warming her feet. She smiled as her golden retriever BG, aka Body Guard, jumped the waves and bit at the trailing sea foam.

Abbie never went anywhere, not even on a morning jog, without a gun. Was it the Girl Scouts or the CIA that taught her to be prepared? Didn't really matter—she never let her guard down. Tucked under her sweatshirt at the small of her back, was a well-worn holster. A Glock inside.

Always a sucker for sand-washed stones, Abbie came to a sudden stop. A perfect one for skipping, pancake shaped and black, lay half embedded in the wet sand. She picked it up. Wiping it clean, she tucked it between her index finger and thumb and pulled her arm back, ready to throw.

But something wasn't right. After seven years in the CIA she'd learned to trust her gut. Crouching, she scanned the distant sand dunes beyond the sea wall. Light reflected off something about a hundred yards away—the muzzle of a gun.

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This begins *Code Name: Purple Fire*, the first in a series of special ops novellas. If you like tension-packed thrillers, gutsy women, alpha males, and a story you can't put down, *Purple Fire* is for you.

You might ask, what caused *me* to write a special operations novella? I've never been a member of the CIA, never trained as a SEAL, and had no knowledge guns, "flying machines," or special ops extractions. My simple answer: I like to read thrillers. It's one of my favorite genres. But little did I know how sharp the "learning curve" would be as I began researching and writing. What I did know was that the story had to be unique, current, fast-paced, and accurate. Call it organized chaos.



Special Operations team \* 21<sup>st</sup> Century photo

As I began to research, my curiosity was triggered by SEAL Team Six—the one that extracted Osama bin Laden from Pakistan. I read books, a lot of them. *No Easy Day*, *Service: A Navy SEAL at War*, *American Sniper*, and more. I watched movies that helped me with visual drama. *GI Jane*, *American Assassin*, and *Zero Dark 30*. Each film included images that I wanted in my novel. It's all about painting a picture with words.

Going global with a search for my plot line, I began following newspaper articles on Kim Jong-un, dictator of North Korea, and his grandstanding about deliverable nuclear warheads. He was fast becoming the Far East's worst nightmare: unpredictable, ruthless, and psychotic. If he gained nuclear capability, the world would be at risk of a fiery holocaust.



Kim Jong-un \* SAIS photo

I'd gleaned many elements of my thriller, but still searched for an event to draw the disparate pieces together. Then, I read in *The Wall Street Journal* about Pope Francis placing the bones of St. Peter on display in the necropolis below St. Peter's in Rome. Previously, they had only been available for papal veneration, now the world could see them. It also made them vulnerable.

On a previous trip to Rome I toured the necropolis and found it fascinating. Memories of my visit returned—brought to light by Dan Brown's *Angels and Demons*, and James Rollins' thriller, *Blood Gospel*. I still remember the smell of moist earth from recent excavations, the chill that embraced me while viewing recently entombed popes, and the one-time location of St. Peter's bones.



Pope Francis with the relics [bones] of St. Peter  
CNS Photo

On Display in the Necropolis  
Timeless Italy

But the book needed more—a catalyst to draw these fascinating stories together. Again, Pope Francis helped me out. He offered a special mass for families harmed by the Mafia, calling on the Mafioso to “stop its evil ways, or be damned to hell.” Strong words for the “godfathers” who rule by threats, blackmail, murder, and coercion.

A few months later the Pope excommunicated a number of the brotherhood—most of them from Sicily. Would the Mafia accept this? Not likely. Assassinating the Pope was far too

risky, but they could denigrate his character, make his decisions questionable, reduce his credibility.

Now, I had a story. The catalyst was the theft of St. Peter's relics by the Mafia. The recipient—unstable Kim Jong-un. The North Korean dictator demanded a ransom: \$115 billion euros (pay-back to the Mafia) and missiles to carry nuclear warheads. Suddenly we had a significant global threat. The Vatican and countries in close proximity to North Korea called for America's help—a special ops team was the only force that could extract the bones and de-escalate Kim's threats.

The team included a female CIA operative, Abigail Scott, and SEAL team commander, Cooper Sinclair. These two were the designated leaders of the SEALs. Tension and timing were key elements. The team had fourteen days to retrieve the relics to avert destruction of the bones and possibly a nuclear holocaust. Every minute counted. Add to that an assassin—the one with the gun high above the beach that Abbie spotted just before she and BG dove for cover. Now and I had the makings of a real page-turner.

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I hope you enjoyed this peek into the planning and writing of *Code Name: Purple Fire*. If you read the novella, please review it on Amazon when you finish. Thoughtful reviews are an author's reward for hard work. I'll publish two more novellas in 2016—*Code Name: Yellow Fire*, and *Code Name: Crimson Fire*. Watch for them!

#### **Information on the author and accessing *Code Name: Purple Fire***

1. If you'd like to "look inside," or purchase [Code Name: Purple Fire](#), please click on the title.
2. If interested in my other novels, please click [here](#).
3. If curious about the inner-workings of an author's mind, click [here](#).
4. And please join me on [LinkedIn](#).

Thanks, and happy reading!

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