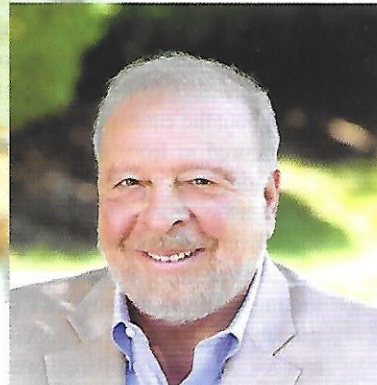
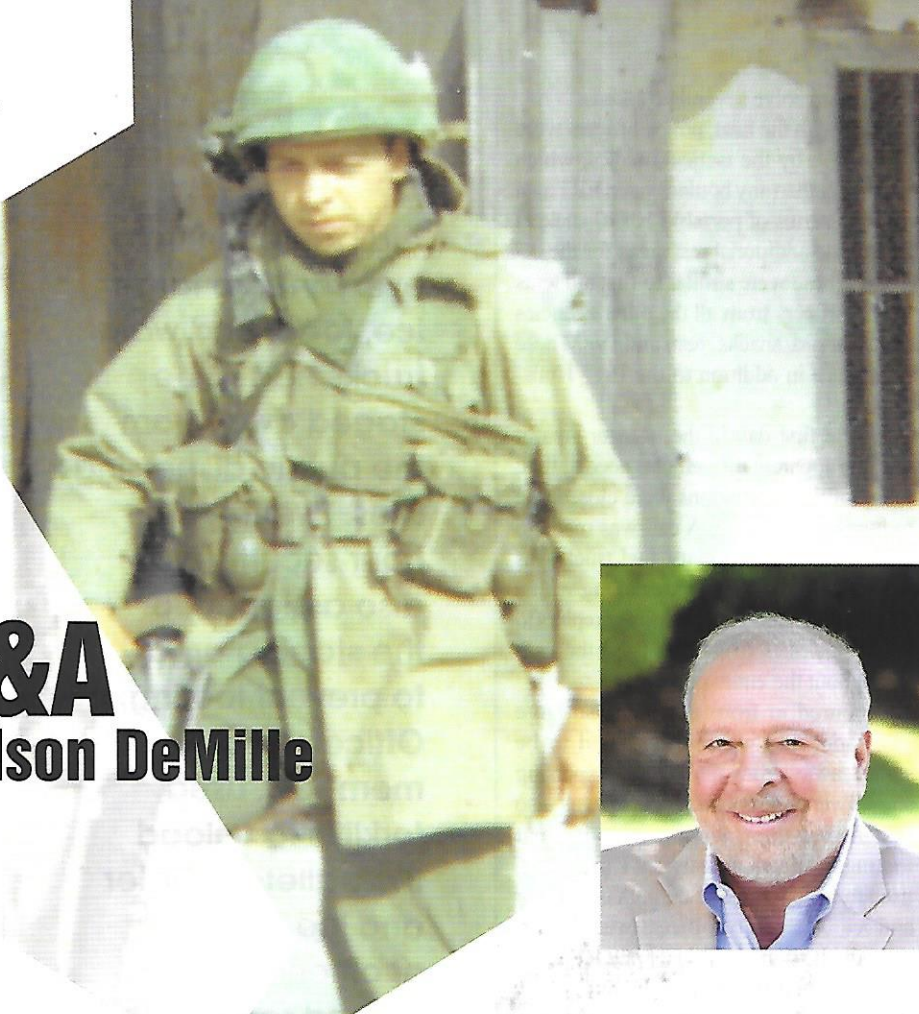




Veneratio Diligentia Vires



IACSP Q&A With Author Nelson DeMille

Nelson DeMille is the author of fact-based international thrillers that deal with terrorism, espionage and crime, including “Cathedral,” “The Lion’s Game,” “The Panther” and “Radiant Angel.”

He was born in New York City on August 23, 1943 and then moved with his parents to Long Island. He spent three years at Hofstra University and then joined the U.S. Army where he attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a Lieutenant in the United States Army (1966-69). He saw action in Vietnam as an infantry platoon leader with the First Cavalry Division and was decorated with the Air Medal, Bronze Star, and the Vietnamese Cross of Gallantry.

After his discharge, DeMille returned to Hofstra University where

he received his bachelor’s degree in Political Science and History.

He is a member of American Mensa, The Authors Guild, and is the past president of the Mystery Writers of America. He is also a member of International Thriller Writers and was chosen as ThrillerMaster of the Year 2015. He holds three honorary doctorates: Doctor of Humane Letters from Hofstra University, Doctor of Literature from Long Island University, and Doctor of Humane Letters from Dowling College. He has sold more than 50 million books worldwide

He was interviewed by Paul Davis, a contributing editor to the Journal.

IACSP: Some of your novels, like “The Lion’s Game” and “The Panther,” deal with international terrorism and your character John Corey went from being a New York cop to working on an anti-terrorism task force. What drew you towards counterterrorism as a subject for your novels?

DeMille: I was fascinated by the Cold War and I’ve written one major Cold War novel, “The Charm School.” Then the Cold

War ended and I was looking for subjects to write about. I thought the war on terrorism would be a challenge and I looked at what was happening at the time. My character John Corey first appeared in “Plum Island.” He was a NYPD homicide detective, wounded in the line of duty, and retired on 90 percent disability, which meant that he couldn’t come back to the force. I’d never written a series before, and “Plum Island” was not meant to be a series. But everyone loved John Corey and they wanted me to bring him back.

IACSP: I like John Corey as well. He's tough, cocky, irreverent and sarcastic.

DeMille: He pays the rent. I have a friend, Kenny Hieb, and he was retired NYPD working for the Joint Terrorism Task Force and he was the one who said to me why don't you make John a contract agent for the task force, which I did. But I renamed it the Anti-Terrorist Task Force. You get a lot more lee-way when you fictionalize an organization. You want to respect the men and women who work there and at the same time make it a bit more dramatic and take a little literary license. I kind of got into it. I was not as fascinated by the subject matter as I was the Cold War, but I think that's a generational thing. I was brought up with the Cold War and it was second nature for me. I've read probably half the Cold War thrillers ever written and most of the nonfiction, but now I've immersed myself in the war on terrorism, which has a lot more nuances to it. It was a lot of hard work, I learned a lot, and I hope represented it accurately.

IACSP: I believe you have. Beyond your friendship with Kenny Hieb, how extensive is your research?

DeMille: I use to do ride-alongs with the NYPD. I have a lot of friends who are NYPD and Nassau County PD. I live in Nassau County on Long Island. The FBI has been forthcoming, but I get most of my info from retired FBI, because they tend to speak more freely. My research starts at the library and then I travel and I interview people.

IACSP: Do the cops and the feds like your books?

DeMille: I've never gotten any negative feedback from them. I get a lot of positive feedback from all over the country via my website. They may appreciate that I'm on their side.

IACSP: There are so many novels and TV and films that are anti-cop, anti-intel and anti-military, so yes, I believe the active duty and retired cops, federal agents and intelligence officers do appreciate books like yours. I certainly do.

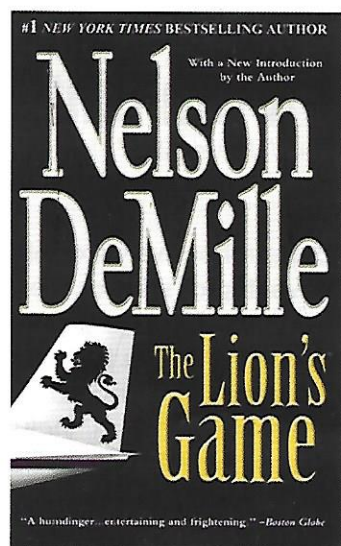
DeMille: When I first created John Corey he was NYPD and his distin-

guishing feature was that he was not politically correct. The rank and file cops related to him. I'm not sure if all of the brass did, but I've spoken to former NYPD commissioner Ray Kelly and I've had dinner with former NYPD commissioner William Bratton. They kind of enjoy the books.

IACSP: I thought you were a bit too hard on CIA officers in "The Panther." Have you thought of writing a book that features a CIA officer as the protagonist?

DeMille: I respect the CIA, especially what they do in Afghanistan - it's amazing. I've been thinking about writing a book about a CIA operative, a good guy. I wanted to do a modern James Bond. He was a cool character and he was the hero. I haven't come up with the plot yet.

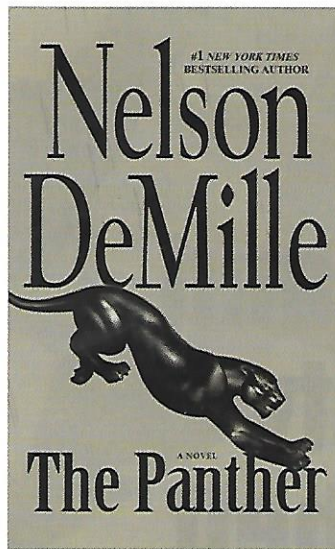
IACSP: I interviewed former CIA officer Gary Berntsen here a few years ago. He was involved in Operation Jawbreaker in Afghanistan just after 9/11. He's an interesting guy, sort of a modern-day James Bond. I'd like to read a book of yours on the CIA. Is your character John Corey based on a real cop? And is Paul Brenner, your character in "The General's Daughter" and "Up Country," based on a real Army investigator? Are they in part autobiographical?



DeMille: The Paul Brenner character maybe be a bit more autobiographical. I didn't base it on anyone. I barely knew any CID people when I was in the Army. The John Corey character is based on a number of

NYPD and suburban country cops that I've known over the years. I have a lot of police friends. I find them amusing, funny, sarcastic and politically incorrect. They are great storytellers. It is a subculture and once you're into it and understand it, you can create an amalgam of all of the cops. An everyman cop.

IACSP: I find cop humor, which I love, to be similar to the military dark humor I recall from my Navy days, which I'm sure you, as a former



soldier, also see. Your books deal with dark matters, but there is a lot of humor in them. Why do you include so much humor?

DeMille: You can't be unrelentingly grim. Oliver Stone's Vietnam film "Platoon" was accurate up to a point, but what he totally didn't get or represent was the G.I. humor. We used to joke about death every day. You had to joke about it. I thought about that when I started writing some of my characters - they are going to be humorous. John Corey is that kind of character right from the get-go and so is Paul Brenner. I think the American public, which has a good sense of humor, responded to it very well and made the books best-sellers.

IACSP: What books and writers do you like?

DeMille: Joseph Wambaugh gave me a good insight into the police mentality. I thought of him many times when I created John Corey. I like Ian Fleming and

Graham Greene is a great writer. I tend to like British authors. With American writers, it would be Hemingway.

IACSP: Can you give us a brief overview of your life and career?

DeMille: I went to Hofstra University, but I got bored after about three years and the Vietnam War was on, so on April 17, 1966 I joined the Army. I got out in April of 1969. It was a great three years. If I haven't had that experience I know I wouldn't be the same man I am now. I came back and finished college and was kind of bored with the idea of going to a regular work-a-day job. Once you've been a combat infantry officer, nothing is exciting anymore. I consider myself very lucky to have survived that year on frontline duty. That's what drew me to writing, because writing is cathartic but it is also kind of living vicariously. Maybe that's why I admire Hemingway. He wrote about things that he really did. I've tried to keep the adventure up by going back to Vietnam, Moscow, Belfast, and some weird places in the world. Last October I was in Cuba for two weeks. The book I'm writing now is set in Cuba. It has been an interesting life and I have no regrets. Glad I got into writing and I've been doing it for 40 years.

IACSP: Having visited Cuba, what do you think of Guantanamo? Should terrorists captured on the battlefield be given military tribunals or should they be tried in civilian courts?

DeMille: They should be tried by the military. It is either a war or it's not a war. I think Congress should declare war on terrorism. A declaration of war. We have a war on drugs, wars on this and that, and these are not real wars. A war on terrorism should not be confused with the war on drugs, obesity or whatever. A declaration of war on terrorism would change the whole political and diplomatic picture on how this war is being fought. I'll tell Donald Trump that when I see him.

IACSP: Thank you for speaking to us.

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