

“Do you like to do extensive character biographies, or do you like letting characters develop as you write along? And what do you think the strengths and weaknesses are of these approaches?”

I think it depends on the genre and the storyline. For example, if the plot is more character-driven, and you want to kick up the level of suspense a notch, hold back salient features for a greater impact at the right time. Evenly sprinkle tidbits until each character is fully developed. Balance with the plot is important. We mustn't deprive readers from character bonding.

When external circumstances drive the plot, extensive character biographies could be more appropriate. The weakness in this approach is readers may forget characteristics as they go deeper into the story.

“What was your nickname as a kid? How did it affect you? Does it affect you still?”

Okay, here goes. My nickname was “Liver Louie.” My mom used to precook liver for a liver-and-onions fry. One day I was in a rush, and I mistakenly used the half-cooked liver to make a sandwich. I told my friends about it and the nickname was invented. I didn't like the nickname because it wasn't macho sounding. Today, I couldn't care less. But read on, it gets more interesting.

Here's a rundown on other nicknames in my group: Moose, Boo-Boo, Roach, Snake, Ougoo, Bouger, Brer Rabbit, Punk, Pookie, Goose, Weasel, Chunky, and not to forget, **Big Butt Bogus**. Fearing reprisals, I've refrained from revealing surnames.

“What is the hardest or strangest job you ever held? How did that affect the way you look at life or people?”

The strangest and most interesting job was driving an ambulance. I worked and lived at the ambulance service much of my high school years. That experience graphically stressed our mortality, and what can happen when animal instincts emerge in humans.

I grew up in a blue-collar Texas port town, at a time when we didn't wear seatbelts. Actually, the ambulance job is the focal point of my next novel. If I achieve my goals, readers will taste and feel the essence of that unique environment. One can expect suspense, intrigue, violence; and yet, the fresh, earthy humor of teen frivolity, and the sweet flavor of happy days in the '50s