

Rubinstein releases unexpected follow-up to acclaimed thriller

by Christopher Burns
Reporter

A simple case of supply-and-demand led Wilton novelist Mark Rubinstein to pen a follow-up to his thrilling novel, *Mad Dog House*. Its sequel, *Mad Dog Justice*, continues the story of Roddy Dolan and Danny Burns as they attempt to discover who is trying to kill them. It's available now on Amazon.com.

"So many people wanted a follow-up because of the ending of *Mad Dog House*," Dr. Rubinstein said Tuesday. "They wanted to know what would happen to Roddy and Danny. Basically the readers virtually demanded the follow-up."

Dr. Rubinstein hadn't expected to write a sequel, but said he was lucky "there was certainly room in the original book for one. So that's what I did."

The original novel, *Mad Dog House*, has garnered more than 140 five-star ratings on Amazon, and revolves around the investment decisions of a suburban surgeon and his best friend, set amidst "...the glitter of New York's nightlife."

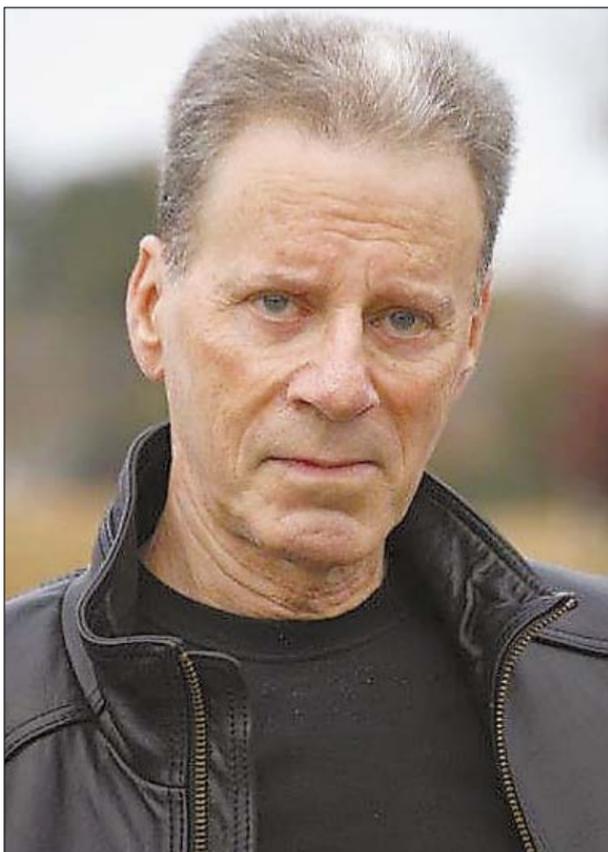
"Amongst Mafia honchos and Russian thugs, events spin out of control and the lives Roddy and Danny knew are over. Hidden shady dealings drag them and their families into life-threatening terrain. Struggling with a monster he thought he'd buried, Roddy must make momentous choices, and none are good," the book's synopsis reads.

Mad *Dog Justice*, Dr. Rubinstein said, revisits the lives of Roddy and Danny as they attempt to unmask characters attempting to kill them.

"They think they know why they are being hunted, but they aren't totally sure," Dr. Rubinstein says. "They just know they have to leave their homes, leave their practices, and do their best to find out who's after them and why."

Those readers who have become fans, the author says, are those who value great depth of character development, and thrilling plot lines.

"People who really seemed to gravitate towards *Mad Dog House* were people who really love the thriller and suspense genres, but on top of that, people who really value characters. They want to care about the character," he said.



Mark Rubinstein

"As a psychiatrist, I'm very interested in character and personality. Plot can do a great deal, but many books with a devastating plot have characters that are all cardboard. A novel worth reading and one that is engaging has character that you care about, and worry about."

One way the author is able to make characters like Danny and Roddy so believable, he says, is by asking himself one important question.

"My ideas can come from almost any place, but I find it useful to ask a simple question: What if?" he said.

"What if you're on the MTA and the guy next to you is yacking away on his cell phone and you confront him? What if this guy is a maniac?"

Though his readers are often fans of character development, he certainly doesn't sacrifice his plot lines.

"[My novels] are talking about real life," Dr. Rubinstein said. "I write thriller novels that, to a great extent, truck in fear. We all experience fear. Not anxiety or worry, but primal fear. I find the most frightening things are those that can really happen in real life. A former lover stalking somebody, or running into a

confrontation that turns into something deadly, or [like in *Mad Dog House*] making a bad investment and suddenly finding yourself in criminal activity."

He develops ideas from these "real-life" situations through a number of mediums, including newspapers, magazines, and books, he said. However, by the time the book is on the shelves, he sometimes has no idea where parts of the novel came from.

"The bottom line is, after the book is over, I will take it down from a shelf and look at it and say, 'where on earth did this all come from?' It comes in bits and pieces, which is what I love about writing fiction: the character grows, the story morphs, and by page 180 I have to change page 30 because the character or story has veered off," he said.

Though some creative writers may be put off by such a random process, Dr. Rubinstein takes pleasure in the unknown.

"Part of the pleasure of writing is the unknown, or the vicarious adventure. We all love fear as long as we can experience it vicariously," he said.