

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

JA Konrath
author of
WHISKEY SOUR

I was recently mistaken for being a woman.

I took it as a compliment.

Many people who read my novel *Whiskey Sour* assume the author must be female. After all, the hero is a cop named Jacqueline Daniels, and it's written in first-person perspective, i.e.: "I tugged out my .38 and adjusted my underwire, which was digging into my ribs."

The name on the cover says "JA," and everyone knows that when two initials are used, the author is really a woman. Right?

Wrong.

I'm a card carrying member of the Y-chromosome. I brew my own beer, I like to watch boxing, and I don't own anything Fendi.

So what am I doing writing chick-lit mysteries? Do I have some deep, Freudian issues that I'm working out? Was I forced to mainline estrogen to appease an unscrupulous publisher? Do I have a fetish for Minolo Blahniks?

The answers are no, no, and no--though if Minolo ever made a loafer in a Men's Size 9.5 W, I'd give it a shot.

To understand why I write for a woman, we first need to look at the woman.

Jack Daniels is a Lieutenant in Chicago's Violent Crimes Division. She's forty-six, divorced, dyes her hair when the roots start to show, and hates wearing nylons on humid days. Jack is tough, honest, and an over-achiever; she has to be to succeed in a male dominated profession in the Murder Capitol of America. She has trouble in her relationships, because the Job always comes first, and she suffers from insomnia, which causes her to blow a lot of money on infomercial products at 3AM.

As for me, I'm thirty-four, married, and I embrace the gray in my hair—I'm happy to even *have* hair. While Jack studied Poly Sci in college, I opted for Television. Both majors left us totally unprepared for the job market, though Jack's desire to right wrongs is more altruistic than my desire to write novels. I'm also tough, honest, and an over-achiever; I have to be to succeed in the female dominated profession of Big City Publishing.

I wrote my first novel in 1992. You might remember it, if you're my mother. It wasn't published. Neither were my second, third, or fourth through ninth books. I racked up over 480 rejections, wrote over a million words, and didn't sell a single verb. If there were an award for the World's Biggest Loser, I wouldn't even win that.

So when it came time for the tenth book, I took a long, hard look at myself, the publishing world, and where I fit in, and I discovered a wonderful irony. When I was growing up, publishing was, for the most part, a man's profession. Men were the editors. Men were the agents. Men wrote the novels.

The opposite is true today. My agent, and her partner, are women. My editor, her boss, her assistant, my copy editor, my marketing director, my publicist—all women. And why not? Mystery fiction is dominated by women authors, and mystery books are bought primarily by women (as much as 80%, I've read).

Creating Jack for my tenth novel was no brainer. It disturbs my wife somewhat; she gets weirded-out reading love scenes that her husband has written from a female POV.

My mom, who always wanted a daughter, thinks it's hilarious.

And me? I love it. Jack is both challenging, and liberating, to write for. She's got an emotional range that is so much wider than all of the male protagonists I'd created in the past. She pushes me to my creative limits and forces me to think outside the box.

I chose to go by my initials "JA" rather than my masculine first name, because I'm honored to follow in the footsteps of wonderful writers like PD James, JD Robb, JA Jance—women one and all.

And if an occasional reader mistakes me for a woman, I couldn't ask for higher praise.

It's about time things came full circle, don't you think?

To arrange an interview with J.A. Konrath, please contact, Karin Maake at 212-456-0177.