

- 1) *Gary Morrissey is an interesting protagonist. He has a little woe-is-me, hang-dog in him. How do you see the changes he undergoes as the novel progresses? How will he grow as the book becomes a series?*

Fictional characters who either lead idyllic lives or apparently overcome total emotional carnage in the span of three paragraphs have always put me off. I want Gary to be a true-to-life human being. When he's cut, he bleeds--and copiously. If it's deep enough, he might require stitches! He'll get over his mental agonies, but it will take a combination of internal inventory-taking as well as the care and feeding of good friends coupled with just a bit of luck. He doesn't come out of his funk in LOW END, but he is finally aware of the nature and scope of his problems and can formulate a plan for his emotional restoration.

Gary has a hard time successfully coping with others' opinions of him. He takes all the negatives spoken over him and considers them gospel. In fact, even when he is complimented, he tries to find the ulterior motive. It's going to take time to fix him and I see this process coming to a satisfactory rejuvenation of Gary's psyche, but it won't happen in the sequel. Oh, he'll improve, but the healing will take time and love.

- 2) *Your conspiracy theory is bold enough. Aside from giving your plot a place to go, you are clearly disturbed by drug use. Comment?*

I am quite anti-drug. I have seen too many lives destroyed by 'recreational' drug use. Gary and I share a very similar life experience in one crucial respect, we both were introduced to meth as a fix for sleepiness and drunkenness while on the road with rock bands. I was lucky and got out of the trap, many friends didn't. Drugs ruin brains, stifle creativity and shorten lives. The Baby Boomer generation has either fostered or been the catalyst in some of the most sweeping changes and advances our society has experienced. I often wonder how much more might have been--if drugs hadn't burned out so many minds.

- 3) *You mention Detective O'Brien in the preface, and pretty much give away your antagonist, long before he's introduced. What was behind that decision?*

[Off the record? I expected the publisher to put that little disclaimer in at the end. I am trying to get this sorted out before the release. Your galley will not, I hope, be what the vast majority of readers will see!]

As a long-time resident of Yonkers I have a great deal of respect for the police department there. This is a force made up of decent men on the whole, and I was anxious for readers to understand up front that my intent was not to slam the YPD with my O'Brien character. Unlike Gary, I have a deep respect and admiration for those who protect us and wanted folks to know that right away!

- 4) *In the last chapter, Morrissey gives away a lot from the perspective of passed time. Will you have to undo any of that for the series?*

Only slightly! Gary says that he is going to stay on the wagon as far as drinking is concerned, but I needed him to still bend the elbow a bit in the sequel. I have prepared the stage for the next story in that last chapter. Gary alludes to another run-in with the police and a move north. The sequel, tentatively entitled 'DEEP END: The Wreck of the Eddie Fitz' is the recount of this particular encounter mentioned in the last chapter of LOW END. By the way, the sequel expands the character of Brad, O'Brien's partner. After DEEP END I only envision one more installment. Gary will face troubles after his move, but he will now have the emotional resolve and quality content of character to deal with what he's handed. The fourth and final book is almost completed and will end the LOW END lineage.

- 5) *What's next for your protagonist?*

We are going to learn that Gary has an uncanny knack for being in the wrong place at the wrong time. His story will pick up three years after the action of LOW END. Gary has a better perspective on the feminine gender but has yet to find his true love. He understands that the romantic hiccup that was the Lisa character in LOW END and he is busy rebuilding a marketable persona. He still has a way to go.

Gary is once again thrust under the scrutiny of the police when he and his scuba dive buddy find a murder victim in the waters of Long Island Sound. This murder victim is not the product of your ordinary garden-variety crime of passion or murder-for-hire. It's a very different spin on murder. I don't want to spoil it, so I'll say no more!

- 6) *How on earth can you prefer a Telecaster to a maple-necked Strat? (Hahahaha)*

Gary has his Telecaster, all these years later, purely from sentimentality. This was his first 'real' guitar and as such holds a special place in his heart. "It looms large in my legend," he'd probably say. The Strat that he had in AIR RAID was sold only because he could get more money for it, and he desperately needed the bucks. Gary does love his Tele. They, Tele's, do have their niche. Someone once said that a Strat wails like a woman and a Tele shrieks like a streetwalker. Not exactly a PC analogy, but true nonetheless. Gary likes that over-the-top edginess that he can get with his Tele. He will eventually mature to a new level of musicality and the Strat given him by the Captain will help him explore his new artistic stature.

- 7) *One of the victims in LOW END, Martin Seddon, is a living,*

*breathing friend of yours. He also wrote a glowing endorsement of your book. How did he feel about having his character being killed off?*

He thought it was hysterical that he had been murdered. Marty is probably the good-humored person I've ever known. He has that Monty Python/Fawlty Towers brand of zaniness so he laughed at his unpleasant demise! His only negative comment about LOW END was this: "Do I really drink that much? I have a drink in my hand whenever I'm mentioned!" One thing I'd like to say, Martin is as good a friend to me as he was to Gary.

When I was hammering out the outline of LOW END, I knew that either Marty or Lisa would have to die to propel Gary onto the path I wanted him to follow. Gary hadn't known Lisa long enough for me to be confident that he would do what I needed him to do as a result of her demise. With Marty's death, Gary would be forced to drastic action. I hated doing it. Marty was much better about it!

8) *It's my view that Morrissey has a pretty clear idea that he's a damaged package (particularly after the scene when the woman pushes the man through the window). Will subsequent novels continue to explore that darkness?*

You're one hundred percent right in your assessment! Gary's greatest stumbling block to healing and happiness is his reticence to portray himself as a 'good' person. Aside from his closest friends, he has scared everyone else off. You see, his ex-wife told him he was useless, unloving, unworthy, and unlovable. Because this came from the one person in the world he truly loved, he believed it. It was a lie, yet he still bought into it and projected it into the realm of the self-fulfilling prophecy. As I said before, Gary will have to deal with this inner darkness and it will take time. He has become aware of the nature of the problem and this revelation has given him a place to start the repairs. He will explore the darkness in his soul, but can see a flicker of light and will head in that direction.

9) *You have said that LOW END is a battle between one man's fractured morals and another man's paranoia. How do you see the two men? Are they black and white? I feel there are many shades of gray...*

Gary is a bit paranoid, isn't he? I strove to have neither man be totally good or totally evil. Of the two, O'Brien was originally of higher moral fiber. As has been said, you can't fall and get hurt unless you've attained a certain height, and this is what I wanted to convey with O'Brien. He couldn't fix society's ills within the system and it cost him his sanity. Gary was always a bit of a sociopath; it was almost an accident that he came out on the 'right' side.