

### Missouri Native Writes About Africa

(West Harrison, NY) St. Joseph, Mo., native Dave Donelson's latest novel, *Heart of Diamonds*, was released this week to bookstores nationwide. The novel, a romantic thriller about love, scandal, and death in the Congo, draws heavily on Donelson's travels in Africa and extensive research of events in the war-ravaged land at the center of the continent.

The book's plot includes diamond smuggling, civil war in the Congo, intrigue in the White House, as well as a magnificent chase along crocodile-infested rivers, overland through raging gun battles, and into the sky in armed helicopters. One Amazon reviewer said, "There's enough sometimes-bloody action and intense suspense to please the most demanding thriller addict."

"There's a big romantic love triangle in the plot, too," Donelson adds. "The heroine, Valerie Grey, is a TV reporter who receives a marriage proposal from her long-time lover just before she leaves for the Congo on assignment. But then she meets an altruistic doctor in Africa, Jaime Talon, and the sparks fly. I think the romance adds depth to the book."

Donelson is a freelance writer and photographer whose byline has appeared in publications as diverse as *The Christian Science Monitor*, *Westchester Magazine*, and *Disney's FamilyFun*. He is a native of St. Joseph, Mo., and a graduate of Central High School and Missouri Western State University. He lived in Kansas City, Mo., for several years and currently resides in West Harrison, NY.

*Heart of Diamonds* is his third book, but the author's first foray into the thriller genre. "I wanted to write something that captures the vibrancy and complexity of Africa, and a suspenseful adventure with overtures of romance seemed like the perfect approach," he says.

The novel also addresses the major issues facing the Congo and much of Africa. "The people of the Democratic Republic of Congo face so many human challenges that they just had to have a big place in the book," Donelson says. "More than five million people have died there since 1998—making what's known as the Second Congo War the deadliest conflict since World War II. And it's still going on!" Donelson writes about rape as a weapon of terror, child soldiers, widespread corruption at all levels of government, and the very sad plight of the hundreds of thousands of refugees from the violence that continues to wrack the nation.

"My wife, Nora, and I traveled to Africa twice to research the book," Donelson explains. "As a journalist, I'm a stickler for detail. Seeing the landscape and meeting the people in person was the only way to achieve the level of authenticity I want." He adds that he took thousands of photographs in Uganda and Zambia, many of which are used as graphic chapter headings in the book.

*Heart of Diamonds* was published by Kunati Books, named Independent Publisher of the Year at the 2008 Book Expo America.

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