

J. John Portera: Biography

J. John Portera is quite a story in and of himself. One fan of his novels, a Memphis artist, has written that, “*this author is as deep and complex as his novels; Dr. J. John Portera is a study in contrasts.*”

Portera graduated from Ole Miss with a B.A. degree, and then accepted a graduate fellowship in the English Graduate School. His intention at the time was to become a writer; however, the responsibility of supporting a family prompted him to accept a dental school position. He practiced and taught reconstructive cosmetic dentistry for 29 years in Mississippi, eight of those years as an associate professor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson. He retired from dentistry in 1998. He worked on a quarter horse ranch, became a physical fitness trainer, and expanded an intense interest in carving exotic hardwoods to a passion for bronze sculpting

In 2000 he moved back to his native West Point, MS., where he began to turn out bronze sculptures in earnest. The main motif of his sculptures are life-size busts of prominent Native American leaders like Sitting Bull, Geronimo, and Crazy Horse, as well as an exquisite reproduction of Chief Joseph, the great warrior and, later, orator of the Nez Perce. He has many wildlife sculptures which he has given imaginative names like “Defiant” for a Bighorn ram and “Rage”, for a charging African bull elephant. Pictures of his sculptures can be seen at his website: www.giovanнисculptures.net.

Ultimately his creative and imaginative talents funneled into the creation of what turned out to be “Conspirators of Revenge”. It was a ten month project from beginning to end, working ten to twelve hours a day. Besides being a highly psychologically charged piece of literature in the murder mystery/thriller genre, the novel has what Portera describes as his *author stamps or trade marks*: ‘*Whenever the weather is presented, it is accurately described for the specific date and location. At times, I actually research the weather after I have written the scene. Ironically, more times than not, the actual weather history for the date and place perfectly fit what I had just written. Obviously, this is serendipity in its purest sense.*’

The author says another unique trait is reflected in the ear he has for the Deep South drawl which, oftentimes, is heard as an improper or indistinct dialect form that he can quite accurately convert into the written word. ‘*I also feel that my descriptive detail, when describing a certain character, comes from my lifelong habit of intensely observing the physical characteristics of those around me. Even I though I do this with great concentration, I attempt to make my study of the individual as subtle as possible; otherwise, I will likely see something that is contrived and not natural.*’

Dr. Portera has been guest speaking to book lovers at regional libraries, as well as doing signings in Kentucky, Tennessee, and Mississippi, since 2005. The first scheduled signing for his latest novel will be in his home town of West Point, MS. It will be held at his favorite hangout, *THE SMOKE STACK*. He will also be presenting discussions of *The Note* at libraries in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Kentucky, beginning in September of 2007. Book signings will also be conducted at many of the Barnes and Noble book stores, as well as many other book retail stores. Scheduling of these events can be made at publicist@jjohnportera.com.