

Michael Stanley introduces Detective Kubu

If this is Tuesday, it must be Minneapolis

June 2nd saw the launch of our second Detective Kubu mystery – *THE SECOND DEATH OF GOODLUCK TINUBU (A DEADLY TRADE* outside North America) – at **Once Upon a Crime** bookstore in Minneapolis, and kicked off a whirlwind book tour of the US. We visited 12 cities and 20 bookstores over six weeks. During that time we were in New York, Minneapolis, Urbana-Champaign IL, Chicago, Milwaukee, Detroit, Ann Arbor, Houston, San Diego and Los Angeles. Signings were interspersed with radio and TV slots and online interviews, and surrounded by Book Expo, Thrillerfest, and the American Library Association convention.

We had strong support from HarperCollins, particularly from our publicist Heather Drucker, and things went smoothly as a result. And publicist Susan Schwartzman buzzed around getting media slots for us. It would be a big challenge to arrange this sort of tour without the support of such knowledgeable and energetic people.

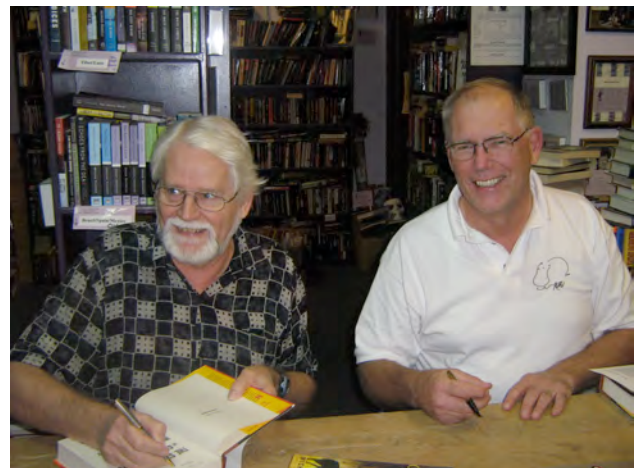
So what is our perspective on this period, looking back three months later?

First, it was great fun. We talked to people who enjoy our books and had read both or intended to do so. We met booksellers who care about mystery books and have an intimidating knowledge of them and their authors. And we spent a lot of time together, enjoying the travel, sharing the experiences, and talking about our third book.

Second, we learned a lot. We discovered that people really care about the ongoing characters in our books, particularly Kubu's family. Interestingly, few questions or comments related to Kubu himself, other than whether he was based on a real person (he isn't). Perhaps people have already formed their own mental pictures of him and where he is going.

Third, it was hard work. We did the Midwest travelling by car from Chicago; there are

long distances involved and the June weather was – to be polite – variable. We had good dinners with old friends, who turned out across the country to support us. And we had a few twists and turns along the way. We were caught up in a demonstration in Los Angeles urging democracy in Iran. We were becalmed on the LA freeway. We had sessions with standing room only, and one – on a Sunday lunchtime on the city's first nice summer day of the year – with no takers at all.



Michael and Stanley having a good time at Aunt Agatha's Mystery & Crime Bookshop in Ann Arbor.

At a more practical level, one can ask what these book tours achieve. Certainly there is value in learning in person what readers think and feel about our writing, even though we get similar feedback by email and over our website. We think the readers enjoy the events and find them interesting. In addition, bookstore owners and managers now have a personal experience of us to link to the books.

But our feeling is that these sorts of issues are irrelevant to most people in the publishing industry, especially in the current weak economic environment. Their question would be: does the time and money spent on a book tour improve book sales? It's a difficult question to answer. One

publicist told us that they know that only half of their marketing has any impact on sales – they just don't know which half. The same goes for us. We are both scientists and have a constant discomfort that there are no data about the effectiveness of what we do for publicity. In reality, we believe that book tours are valuable, but don't ask us to prove it.

So how would we sum up our feelings about the book tour? Let's put it this way. If we're asked to do one next year for our third book, we'll dip into our pockets and start buying the plane tickets!

NEWS FLASH!

A CARRION DEATH has been nominated for a Barry Award by Deadly Pleasures Mystery Magazine for Best First Novel in 2008. The winner will be announced at Bouchercon in October. Other finalists are:

The Kind One by Tom Epperson

Stalking Susan by Julie Kramer

City of the Sun by David Levien

Child 44 by Tom Rob Smith

Sweeping Up Glass by Carolyn D Wall

This follows *A CARRION DEATH* being a finalist for Best Genre Fiction Award in the Minnesota Book Awards, for Strand Magazine Critics' Award for best debut crime novel, and for Mystery Readers International's Macavity Award for Best First Novel.

Kubu in German

Eichborn Publishers in Frankfurt will be publishing the Detective Kubu series in German. Our editor is Karsten Kredel. The translation of *A CARRION DEATH* is already underway, and the book will appear next March. Eichborn are planning a big marketing campaign for the book; hopefully Detective Kubu will be as popular in Germany as in the English speaking world!

Please share this newsletter with friends.

A Visit to the Kalahari

January 2009: Just east of the Kgalagadi Transfrontier Park in southern Botswana is the sleepy village of Tsabong. It is near here that a game ranger is murdered at the beginning of our third book. Of course, we had to visit it to check the details.

As usual, we visited the local police chief and the head of Nature Conservation. They were both very helpful in understanding the dynamics of the area. And we also spent time with the local Botswana Tourism office, which also provided plenty of useful information.

But perhaps the most interesting place we visited was Berrybush Farm – a B&B a few kilometers outside Tsabong. It is run by Jill Thomas – long-time resident, who is a mine of information and stories about the area. As you can see from the photo, the area isn't exactly lush.



Berrybush Farm, Tsabong

One of the surprises was a herd of camels. All but one are retired from the Police Force, which used them in times past to traverse the desert. Today they've been replaced by 4x4s. The one non-retiree was a gift from Muammar Ghadaffi to Sir Seretse Khama, who couldn't find a use for it and sent it to join its colleagues in the south.

Tsabong is the administrative center of the Kgalagadi district, which covers over 100,000 square kilometers (about 40,000 square miles) with 0.4 people per square kilometer (1 person/sq. mi.)

We also drove to the Mabuasehube Game Reserve on the eastern edge of the transfrontier park. Fortunately the road was in good repair and we didn't get stuck. We recommend a trip to this area. It is vast, desolate, and infinitely interesting.

Another Visit to the Kalahari

September 2009: Michael and I didn't know the central Kalahari very well – where much of our third book takes place. So off we went driving 3,600 kms (over 2000 miles) in a week, from Johannesburg to Gaborone to Hukuntsi to Ghanzi and finally to Windhoek in Namibia. Then back!

Hukuntsi and its neighboring towns of Tshane (where the local police station is situated) and Lehututu were our prime targets, but since Namibian nationals are involved in book 3, we had to speak to the police in Namibia about cross-border protocols.

The Trans-Kalahari Highway is paved – mostly fenced too. The animals – a perennial hazard – have figured out that the best grazing is next to the road where the rain runs off. The fences, once designed to keep animals off the roads – now serve to keep them on them!

We had a great dinner at the NICE restaurant in Windhoek (NICE = Namibian Institute for Culinary Education). It's an excellent restaurant – with amazing photos of chefs in the desert.



The Kalahari Desert

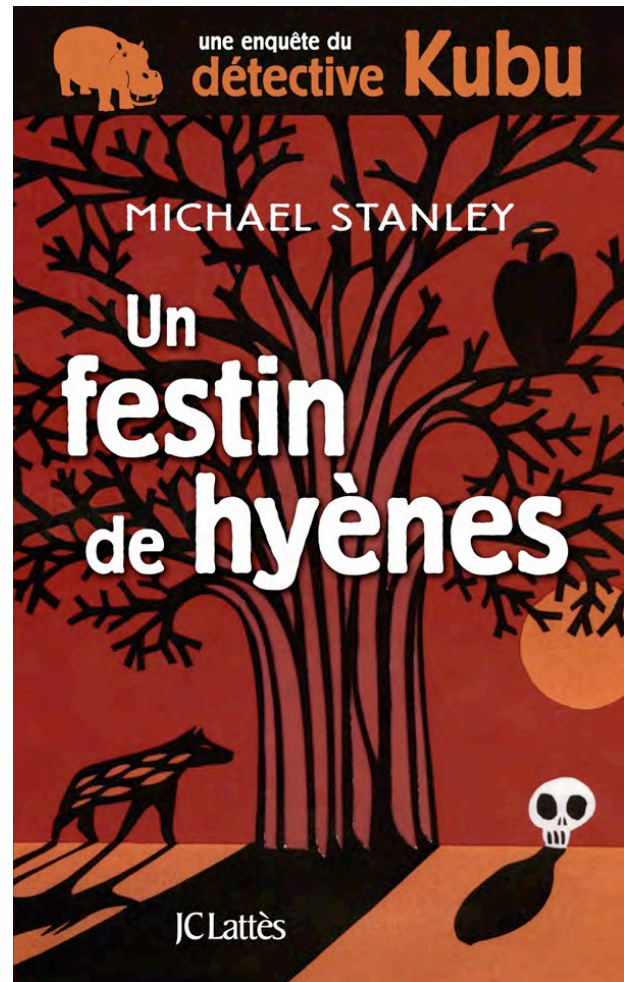


The Kalahari is so exciting that the signs tell you how far it is to nothing!

A Feast for Hyenas

JC Lattes released the long-awaited French edition of *A CARRION DEATH* on September 3rd. Stanley was in Paris for the occasion and appeared on France 24 television and Radio France International. He was relieved that both interviews were in English!

Apparently there is no good translation of the phrase *A CARRION DEATH*, so the title became *UN FESTIN DE HYÈNES* – A Feast for Hyenas.



An early review in the French publishers' trade magazine *LIVRESHEDBO* was very complimentary: **"First brilliant episode in the adventures of Inspector Kubu of the Botswana Police."**

"Cet inspecteur Kubu, avec sa force tranquille et son humour, est absolument épatant. On a déjà hate de le retrouver." (Thanks to his quiet strength and humour, Inspector Kubu is stunning. We are already looking forward to meeting him again.)

Cafepress Sells Kubu Stuff

Online marketing site cafepress.com is now offering items with the Kubu hippo logo! Ever since *A CARRION DEATH* launched at Once Upon a Crime with Kubu T-shirts, people have been asking for them. Now Cafepress has golf shirts with a pocket logo, dark T-shirts with the white logo, mugs, magnets, and totes.



Gary Schulze of *Once Upon A Crime* models his Kubu teeshirt.

Please visit the site and see if there is something you'd like to remind you of Kubu between books!

www.cafepress.com/detectivekubu

and in the UK use

www.cafepress.co.uk/detectivekubu

Visit www.detectivekubu.com.

Review Highlights for THE SECOND DEATH OF GOODLUCK TINUBU

“... a brilliant sequel to last year’s *A Carrion Death*. ...each character is memorable and adds depth to this tense and involving police procedural...”

- *Booklist Starred Review*

"Following his spectacular debut, *A Carrion Death*, Stanley comes roaring back with an even better tale...Highly recommended."

- *Library Journal*

“...one of the best mystery novels of the year.”

- *Bookreporter.com*

“Stanley’s second novel...has everything. There’s plenty of African scenery and lore as the backdrop for excellent police work.”

- *The Globe and Mail*

“[Kubu is] the African Columbo. . . . Like the first book to feature Kubu, *A Carrion Death*, this is a smart, satisfyingly complex mystery.”

- *Entertainment Weekly: A rated.*

“Stanley ratchets up the suspense by bringing danger into Kubu’s family and it’s a delight to see him in full action mode. . . . Detective Kubu is a real discovery: he already feels like an enduring classic to add to the mystery canon.”

- *Killer Book Reviews*

“MOVE over Mma Ramotswa: there’s a new player in town, none other than Gaborone’s Assistant Supt David “Kubu” Bengu, of the Botswana CID, and he is without doubt the most engaging literary detective in Africa.”

- *The Weekender*

“Stanley offers more action ‘out bush,’ while delivering a tale every bit as evocative in its sense of a place and the people who live there.”

- *New Orleans Times-Picayune*

“In their character of Detective David “Kubu” Bengu, the Stanley team have unearthed a real gem. . . . Stanley weaves the natural beauty of Africa with the harsh realities . . . in a very satisfying story. This reviewer cannot wait for the next Detective Kubu adventure.”

- *Daily News (MI)*