



## **SUGGESTED AUTHOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

### **Janice Cantore – Burning Proof, Cold Case Justice series**



**Janice Cantore**...is a retired Long Beach police officer who now writes suspense novels to keep readers engrossed and leave them inspired. Her twenty-two years of experience on the force lend authenticity to her stories. She has penned six novels: the Pacific Coast Justice series, Visible Threat, Critical Pursuit, Drawing Fire, and Burning Proof the second book in the Cold Case Justice series. She also writes a blog about police

**Janice would make a great interview to discuss police-related issues, bringing with her 22 years of experience as a Long Beach CA police officer.**

- **What inspired you to become a police officer after you graduated from college?**  
I really didn't know what to do after I graduated college. I was working as an athletic trainer, at a sport's medicine clinic but really didn't like it. I had a degree in physical education and was studying for a master's degree at Long Beach State in exercise physiology. I worked out a lot and met a lot of people training to take physical agility tests for both firefighting and law enforcement jobs. It looked like a challenge, and after taking a class in criminal justice; I decided to test for police officer. Back then there were usually a couple thousand people applying for 30 openings at any given city. Most people applied at several places. I did, passed several tests, and made it all the way with Long Beach. I wasn't certain I'd like it, but I did, and stayed.
- **Tell us what spurred you on to become a writer after you retired from 22 years as a Long Beach Police Officer.**  
I've always wanted to write. When I was a kid I wrote horse stories. I took a creative writing class in college and my teacher really wasn't very encouraging so I just put the desire on the shelf. It wasn't until I'd been an officer for a few years and experienced the Rodney King riots that the desire to write took hold again. I tired writing stories about the riots, trying to convey all the emotions I felt at the time. Those stories never went anywhere, but I realized that I had a lot of stories in me and began writing, going to conferences and really working on the craft.
- **You say that one lesson that has stayed with you from your days with the LBPD is that bad things can happen to anyone, yet emerging from the bad can make people stronger and better. Can you explain this statement?**

Attitude and faith are everything. I saw a couple lose their 9-month old baby in a traffic accident yet come back stronger as a couple and as parents because they believed in God and that he was in control in spite of the tragic loss. It wasn't easy for them to move forward, but they knew that bitterness would only divide them so in the end their marriage was stronger. I also saw a woman, who, while in college, had been shot in the back by a boyfriend and paralyzed from the waist down. She picked herself up go back to school and eventually become a prosecuting attorney while sitting in a wheelchair. I think when something bad happens to us, coming through the situation makes us stronger if we don't dwell on feelings of self-pity or unforgiveness.

- **You have quite a testimonial that came after you witnessed a horrific car accident on the job. Can you share with us how that accident changed your faith?** That was the car accident where the young couple lost their 9-month-old son. The baby died before the firemen cut the mother out of the car. At the time I was a nominal Christian, but that accident stayed with me for a long time. About a year later I saw an article in the paper about that couple. It was in the faith column and the couple shared how the horrific loss of their son devastated them. But because they we both believers, they leaned into the cross and came out stronger. That made me realize that I really never knew what was going on in the lives of the people I contacted. As a Christian I know the Lord is always working, but I wasn't really connecting that to my work. I began to look at people differently, and praying, after that crash, I prayed a lot more for the people I came into contact with on the job.

- **How did you come up with the idea for your Cold Case Justice series, Drawing Fire and Burning Proof?**

I love the program Castle, that was where the idea came from. I tweaked it, developed Luke and Abby, and went from there.

- **Are either of your characters Abby or Luke modeled after anyone you encountered during your days at the LCPD?**

Not really. They are at most composites of people I worked with or came across.

- **As you reveal in Burning Proof...there are many struggles and stresses that come with being a police officer. You have certainly seen what a fatal event can do to the psyche of an officer, can you share what often goes on from an insider's point of view?**

Tragedy can become routine. There needs to be a way to separate yourself from the situation, do your job, and not let the tragedy take you with it. I remember once, I was working the information desk at the downtown station so I didn't personally handle the call, but officers responded to a horrible call, a man had drowned his two young children in the tub and then tossed their bodies into the dumpster behind his residence. It was a huge deal and I fielded many calls from news agencies. At the information desk I was tasked with giving out what ever public information we had to the press, or anyone who inquired. This meant I had to talk about the event over and over an it began to get aggravating. The press wanted details we couldn't give and they just kept calling. At one point the press officer, who'd been working many hours overtime, came to the front desk

to ask me about the calls and to get some help with the press release. In police work DB means 'dead body' and it's a commonly used abbreviation. Well, the bodies had been recovered from a dumpster, so they became dumpster babies, the abbreviation DB hit us right between the eyes and we began to laugh about the initials, the kind of punch drunk laughing that happens when you're too tired and too stressed. It was not a funny situation, but sometimes you get so close to bad stuff that laughter was the only way to relieve the pressure. The pressure does need to be relieved, too many officers commit suicide because they internalize all the negative.

- **There has been so much negative news lately about police officers and the use of deadly force, even when suspects are "Unarmed", can you speak to this?**

As I write this, another officer has been killed in the line of duty. He was responding to a traffic accident. He didn't know that there was a felon involved in the crash, and the felon shot and killed him. People don't understand how quickly things can happen. I'm sure his mindset was "accident report" not armed homicidal felon. They also don't understand that as police officer in uniform, we are visible to anyone who seriously wants to do us harm and that now, more than ever, there are a lot of people out there who do want to do us harm. Firefighters can decline to respond to a situation if they think there is too much danger. They will wait until the police tell them it's safe to respond.

That being said, police officers have to look at the world differently, no one wants to miss the threat that kills them or a partner. So, if someone is bent on harming a cop, the fact that he/she is unarmed does not mean that they are not a serious danger. Suppose they incapacitate the officer and take his gun? It's fair game to shoot an unarmed person who tries to take your gun away.

In training we saw many videos about police shootings, most where the police officer was killed. The events were dissected, what went wrong? Why did the bad guy win and the cop die? Many times it was because the officer got complacent, he/she was not in the mind set that they were in danger. So, someone in the safety of their home, in front of the TV, has the discretion to see an unarmed person as no threat, but an officer who works the street in an increasingly dangerous world does not. It seems fashionable today to bash the police, but if you need one and call 911 in an emergency, I bet you'd be glad they got there, and fast. There's a meme going around on Facebook that goes something like this, "Don't like the police? Next time you need 911 call a crack head."

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