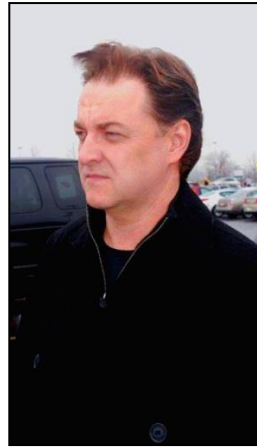
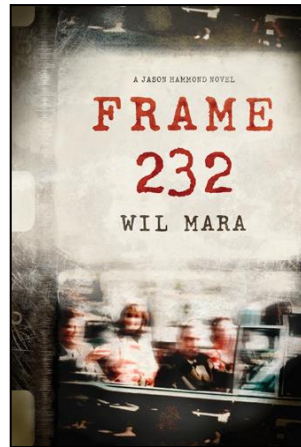


Q & A with Wil Mara, author of *Frame 232*



Coming July 2013

1. What inspired you to write a novel around the assassination of President John F. Kennedy?

I have always been fascinated by the assassination, which, obviously, was one of the most pivotal and enigmatic events in American history. And when I heard about the 'Babushka Lady'---one of the few people in Dealey Plaza that day who remains unidentified---and the possibility that she may have filmed the shooting, an idea came to mind that seemed too good to disregard.

2. How much research did you do for this project?

An unbelievable amount. I spoke with assassination experts, read literally hundreds and books and articles, pored over countless photos...you name it. My goal was to write a fictional story *around* the established facts rather than alter the facts to serve the story. Thus, I had to know pretty much everything. I ended up loading my brain with more data than I really needed...but I didn't mind.

3. How has your research informed your own theory of what happened during the JFK assassination?

My personal theory, prosaic though it may be, is that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. If you want to be convinced, get your hands on a fairly rare book called *Lee*, which was written by his brother, Robert. Once you understand the mind behind the eyes that looked through that rifle scope, you will be convinced.

4. What have you learned about the real Babushka Lady?

She was wearing an overcoat, glasses, and a head scarf (i.e., a babushka), and was standing about thirty feet from the limousine when the president took the fatal shot. Most assassination experts believe she was also holding a camera---very possibly a film camera. If so, and if she had a reasonably steady hand, then she probably took the best moving images of the assassination; even better than the famed Zapruder film. Plus, she was standing opposite Zapruder, which afforded her a unique angle. And yet, we don't know her name, and her film has never surfaced. And here's the most important part about her in relation to *Frame 232*---she was a *real person*. I didn't invent her to serve the story. If you do a Google search, you'll find her.

5. What is the significance of the title?

Simple---once the Babushka film is analyzed, the key moment that helps our heroes move forward with their investigation occurs on frame 232.

6. What role does your Christian faith play in your writing?

It is embedded throughout this story, in a fashion both subtle and direct. I was raised Christian and have been a firm believer all my life, so my belief system is threaded into just about everything I do. Anyone who carries even the most fundamental faith will recognize the important elements in this book. The most obvious example belongs to the main character, who recurs throughout the series---he is suffering a deep crisis of faith, and the core of that crisis should be familiar to even the most devout follower. We are human, plain and simple, and as such we experience doubts about the Lord in our lifetime. So it won't be hard for anyone to connect with him.

7. Describe the role of faith plays in your main characters, Sheila Baker and Jason Hammond. Does this change as the story progresses?

With Sheila, you've got a very goodhearted person who is experiencing a critical change in her worldview---she is coming out of the 'money is the most important thing in the world' phase and beginning to understand that there are much higher priorities. This isn't to say she's trumpeting the virtues of poverty (she still understands that it's important to live within a certain comfortable and respectable standard). But she's figuring out that money isn't what a person should worship---it's something altogether different. And there is a traceable and, I think, very satisfying arc to her story in this regard.

As for Jason, he suffered a tremendous loss years earlier, went through a protracted nightmare period, and is starting to come out of during the events of *Frame 232*. An encounter with a very unlikely source helps him to turn the corner and begin a path to renewed promise---but even so, the journey ahead is going to present serious challenges for him. The good news, though, is that he has not abandoned the Lord altogether. If he had done that, there wouldn't be any conflict within him in the first place.

8. What lessons do you hope readers will come away with after reading *Frame 232*?

I can't interpret the story for anyone but myself, but there are a few themes at work that strike me as particularly valuable. One is that God's path is always the right one in the end, even if it seems unimaginably rocky at times. Another is that tragedies occur in every life, that these misfortunes usually happen for a reason, and that the reason may not be apparent for some time. A third is that we need to treasure our loved ones for as long as we have them around, because they can disappear in a heartbeat. Also, it's important to keep getting out of bed and moving forward every day because life is a gift, and God does not favor those who waste their time and talents. If you are blessed with ability and resources (and Jason has plenty of both), you should use them.

9. What do you have planned for your future Jason Hammond books?

Jason will be tackling other high-profile (and, later on, some lesser-known) mysteries as the series progresses. Readers will also get to follow his ongoing struggles as he rebuilds his faith and gradually assembles his 'new normal.' Plus, we'll further explore the lives of those around him (including a budding love interest, who will appear in the second book). It's also worth noting that not every book in the series will follow a strictly linear chronology. The one I'm writing now, for example (*The Nevada Testament*) begins about six weeks after *Frame 232*. The one I'll write after that, however (*Gardner Island*), occurs *before* the events of *Frame 232* and will feature, among other things, some of Jason's darker and more harrowing moments.

10. What would you like to say to Christian retailers to help them promote *Frame 232*?

I have tried like mad to strike an ideal balance between solid, suspenseful storytelling and the delivery of worthwhile Christian messages without being over-the-top preachy. All the books in the series, while undeniable in their Christian content, are suitable for the mainstream market as well and thus should find a broad audience. It is also important to note that they were designed not just in regard to what they offer, but what they *don't* offer---readers will not have to deal with inappropriate language, gratuitous sexual content, brazen violence, or any of the similar nonsense that characterizes so many other forms of contemporary storytelling. The subject matter might be somewhat advanced in places, but it can be safely absorbed and enjoyed by people from all walks of life.