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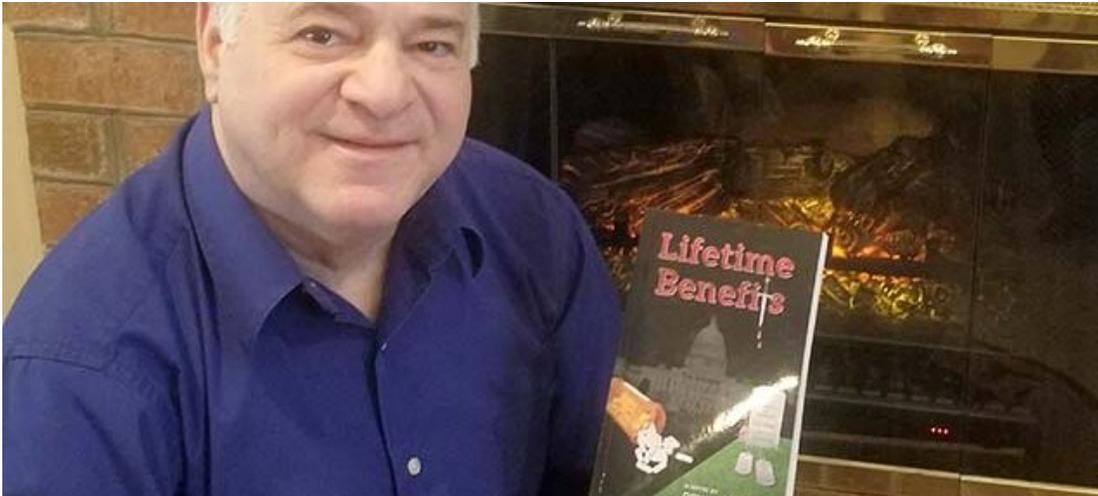
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Don Kappel

Novel: Corruption, drugs, ISIS

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BY AMANDA CREASEY ON MARCH 26, 2020

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Retired Marine, former director Chesterfield County Department of Public Affairs, releases debut novel

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If social distancing as a result of the current coronavirus pandemic has you down, Don J. Kappel has a suggestion to help mitigate the possible boredom: Buy his new book, *Lifetime Benefits*, and escape to a world where a former Marine officer returns home to Richmond, to begin a second career as an insurance agent.

Kappel explained his book's plot: "The unexplained death of a client and friend starts [the protagonist] and his girlfriend on the search for answers. The trail leads to corruption in the nation's capital, a counterfeit drug cartel and connections to ISIS."

Kappel, a retired Major in the U.S. Marine Corps, has also worked as director for the Chesterfield County Department of Public Affairs. His experiences as a Marine helped inform the writing of his first novel, the themes of which include corruption and greed.

Don Kappel

"As a retired Marine, I used to be able to purchase prescription medications locally for myself and my wife. When the government told us we had to only get them by mail order or at a military base, I was unhappy with the idea of a sole source. That led me to think about the plot for the book," he said. The idea first occurred to Kappel about five

years ago. "I started writing down notes and kept adding to them gradually," he said.

His writing process was simple. "I get an idea and create a physical file where I start putting all my notes. After a while, I create a document on the computer and flesh it out from there." This fleshing out doesn't require much. "All I need is time and quiet," Kappel said, explaining that his den at home is his favorite place to write. "I have to have total quiet," he said.

"*Lifetime Benefits*" is Kappel's first published novel, but he is no stranger to the writing world. When he was just 16, he wrote his first published piece—a poem that appeared in *Leatherneck*, the Marine Corps magazine.

Kappel holds an undergraduate degree in English and a graduate degree in journalism, and wrote for *Chesterfield Living* during his time with the County. "Over the years, I have written hundreds of columns, articles, and other materials for a variety of newspapers and magazines."

Although Kappel had plenty of writing experience before he embarked on his novel-writing journey, “the creative process itself was new to me,” he said. Despite his myriad experiences as a writer, he had never been “the author of a complete book. There was a lot more research than I anticipated, even though the story is a fictitious one.”

After five years in the works, “Seeing an idea for a book come to fruition and learning along the way about the publishing process was very interesting,” Kappel said.

And the debut author isn’t done yet. A “possible sequel for this novel is already bouncing around in my head,” he said, in addition to two other books he began writing “quite a while ago.”

According to Kappel, “The Chesterfield County and Henrico County libraries have indicated that I could do a meet the author event and book signing,” but the current pandemic will delay any events he might have in the works. However, Kappel said, “it is a good time for folks to order a copy of the book online and have it delivered to them at home so they have something to read while they are somewhat isolated.”

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ABOUT AUTHOR

AMANDA CREASEY

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