



When Mitch Album became involved with the Orphanage, I started to have hope, and school was finally something that I would have the chance to have. Now that I had the opportunity to go to school, I did not take it lightly but did not give much thought to going to college when Mitch first started to talk to me about it until I realized that this could really happen. Something that I never imagined could happen and was being fulfilled.

When I heard that I was accepted at not one but two universities, I was surprised and the heart that sank for years was finally exploding with joy as the gloom of darkness that cloud my vision was lifted. Now, attending university in the U.S was never my dream, but it will play part in my future, in what I want to do in life. The only thing that I am passionate about is to be able to help others in various ways, especially in my country, Haiti. I will not stop until I can, that is my vision. I came to the U.S on August 8, 2018 and enrolled at Madonna University.

I know that the journey will be long and rough, but I keep my focus on the analogy that I made previously. I will control what I can and let God figure out the rest. I am blessed to be here, and I take my opportunity with all my heart to create something good out of it; not mainly for myself, but for those who really need help. Isn't this what we all must do with our lives? ■

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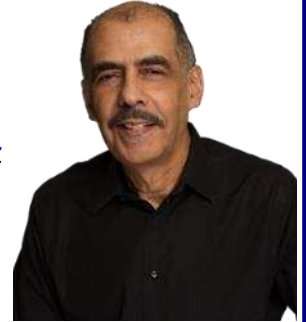


WRITING ABOUT HAITI

by William G Herbert
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As a U.S. born son of the Caribbean, I have always been fascinated by West Indian culture and traditions. My first novel, *A Place near the Front*, tells the story of my father's journey from his native Trinidad to the U.S. in the early 1900s in search of the American dream. When Belle-Janvier, my youngest and part-Haitian grandchild was born in 2015, my Caribbean cultural ties expanded. I knew my next novel would have to be set in the *Pearl of the Antilles*.



The *Bones of Louverture*, now complete and soon to be published, tells a story of events surrounding the fall of Haitian President-for-life Jean-Claude Baby-Doc Duvalier. The year is 1987 and vengeful mobs prowl the streets. Protest leader Sonny and his ambitious comrade, Jacques, battle voodoo traditions and government corruption but veer from their mission of reform and descend into a world of drugs, violence and crime. After setting up a narcotics pipeline to smuggle Colombian cocaine into the U.S., they become top Haitian drug lords. The abandonment of their initial sense of purpose and hopeful dreams, their quick rise to material wealth and subsequent decline mirror Haiti's own recurring cycles of disaster and disappointment and its struggles for rebirth and redemption.

Haiti presented a powerful setting for my story. Throughout its tumultuous history of natural disasters and political upheavals, it has struggled to achieve the promise of its heroic slave-revolt founding. With each new beginning there has been fresh hope that its dreams of full and prosperous nationhood might finally be achieved. But there has been much disappointment.

Haiti's attempt to rebuild following the fall of the Duvalier dynasty provided several intriguing story-telling elements. First there was the Faustian bargain struck by the new ruling class, the military, when it joined forces with South-American drug kingpin, Carlos Escobar, to make Haiti a conduit for the movement of Colombian cocaine to the U.S. My book character, Jacques Maurice, is loosely patterned after real-life Haitian drug-lord, Beaudoin Ketant, who helped set up the Colombian pipeline. Another aspect of the post-Duvalier era that created an atmosphere of danger and suspense was the state-sponsored terrorism embodied in the notorious *Tonton Macoute*, Papa-Doc's personal militia and extortion ring. Legendariness throughout the entire Caribbean.

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