

**Science Fiction Book Club
Interview with David Drake (November 2022)**

David Drake's military experience in the Army during the Vietnam War, combined with his formal education in history and Latin, has made him one of the foremost writers of realistic action Science Fiction and fantasy. His bestselling Hammer's Slammers series is credited with creating the genre of modern Military SF. Due to health issues, Drake has retired from writing novels.

SFBC Member: Any more Raj Whitehall books or spin-offs in the making? You and your co-authors have done Rome, Byzantium, rise of Hitler and Egypt. Maybe India or China next?

No, I don't feel like writing more.

Kev Smith: Some of your books juxtaposed historic themes on to future settings such as Northworld. What do you feel makes this work so well? Also, with the entire wealth of human history to choose from what do you look for when selecting a particular theme?

I wrote about subjects that interested me. I picked up *The Elder Edda* in a bookshop in Iceland.

David Stuckey: Your comedy stories such as the "Petit Harriers", "A Very Offensive Weapon" (For Zelazny's "Ever After") and so on are deft, hilarious and up to your usual standard. Do you enjoy writing more humorous work, and do you have plans to write more entirely comedic work in the future?

I liked writing them, but they weren't where my mind usually went.

John Grayshaw: How has your military experience influenced your writing?

I wrote seriously because I was trying to get my head straight from Nam.

John Grayshaw: Since you've written science fiction, fantasy, and horror, what is it you like about writing in each genre?

I just write about anything that interests me. I don't need to write horror any more.

John Grayshaw: What kind of research did you do for your novels?

I only wrote about what I found interesting, so not much.

John Grayshaw: When did you start to feel like you'd made it as a writer?

I just focused on the writing itself. I didn't think about making it.

John Grayshaw: Which one of your works is your personal favorite and why?

Redliners is more than just a book.

John Grayshaw: Were you surprised by the popularity of Hammer Slammers? What is it about the series that makes it one of your best-known works? And how has it changed/influenced the Military SF genre?

I was hugely surprised.

John Grayshaw: Can you expand on why you've said "Redliners" isn't for civilians?

It was war without any prettiness.

John Grayshaw: Who are some of the science fiction writers that you enjoyed during your childhood?

Henry Kuttner and A.E. van Vogt.

John Grayshaw: Who are some of your favorite current science fiction writers? And why?

I'm not current.

John Grayshaw: You co-authored novels with authors such as Karl Edward Wagner, S.M. Stirling, and Eric Flint. What was this process like?

It was different for each of them.

John Grayshaw: Do you enjoy going to science fiction conventions? Have any fun stories from going to them? Or have you gotten any interesting reader feedback from your works in general?

I don't like being in large groups

John Grayshaw: Any of your works under option for movies or TV?

No

John Grayshaw: What are some of your hobbies other than writing?

I'm exercising regularly now with a trainer to get reasonable strength back

John Grayshaw: Did you have a writing routine that you stuck to?

I got up and worked all morning. Broke at midday and went in town. Then came back and worked until dinner.

John Grayshaw: What is your legacy? Why was your work significant at the time? And why is it still important today?

I told good stories and I tried to tell the truth, that shouldn't be rare.