

# RESULTS of iRead Virtual Book Tour

## BOOK SPOTLIGHT TOUR:

May 21 - [TFaulc Book Reviews](#)

### *GUEST POST*

#### **My next project.**

My next two projects are a documentary film on the Caribbean's contribution to America's development, and a book of my writings from 1967 when I began work as a journalist at The Gleaner Company, the oldest and biggest daily newspaper in Jamaica, and the Caribbean.

The volume of work I have in different disciplines does not allow me to do only one at a time. As a filmmaker, I have at least five projects, documentaries and motion picture screenplays in different stages of development. One, The Caribbean's Contribution to America's Development—From Alexander Hamilton to Now, has been around since 1980. I was inspired in doing this project for PBS from the number of projects shown on the Italian, Irish, British, Jewish, German, Spanish, Dutch, French, Swedish, Norwegian, Chinese influences on the American way of life. But not one project on the Caribbean's input on America's development.

Despite the many contributors and contributions that have impacted how America has evolved over some three centuries, beginning with the immeasurable input of Alexander Hamilton, one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, nothing has emerged on the contribution the tiny countries in the Caribbean, particularly the English speaking countries. I have made approaches, written proposals, applied for funding without any success. However, now that someone I know quite well, with Caribbean connection, has risen to a prominent role in the last couple of years, in the Public Broadcasting Service system, it has given me some hope, and from discussions I have begun updating my proposal to present my project again.

At the same time, I am celebrating 52 years as a professional writer, and 51 years as a journalist. In celebrating this milestone of my life, I have begun work on compiling my writings for a book of articles, essays, short stories, and poems, appearing in newspapers and magazines in Jamaica and America, with a working title VISION & EXECUTION. It's taken from a passage in the bible, "*Where there is no vision, the people perish...*" Proverbs 29:18, which I quoted in the opening of an article that I wrote in The Star newspaper in 1969, in Jamaica.

# iRead Virtual Book Tour

## BOOK SPOTLIGHT TOUR:

May 21 - [The Book Girl](#)

### Author Interview:

There are many books out there about **revolution**....What makes yours different? **It's set in Jamaica, considered a tourist paradise, but with a history of political and gang violence.**

Do you write every day? **Yes.**

What is writing schedule? **Daybreak to late night with breaks midday and early evening.**

If you could put yourself as a character in your book, who would you be? **Old Edmond.**

What's the funniest thing that ever happened to you? The scariest? The strangest? **I was ill in the mid-1970s and in a hospital that was being emptied to be rebuilt as an apartment building, and I was the last patient in the hospital. During that sickness I took the journey of death, and coming out of it a Memorial Day weekend, I was talking in "strange tongues." And two of the doctors investigated some of the things I was saying and discovered that I was talking in the Ge'ez language from Ethiopia and Eritrea.**

What is the last great book you've read? **Democracy for the Few by Michael Parenti.**

If there is one thing you want readers to remember about you, what would it be? **That I advocate truth, justice, equality, and love above all.**

If you were stuck on a deserted island, which 3 books would you want with you? **The Bible, The Quran, and a dictionary.**

# iRead Virtual Book Tour

## BOOK SPOTLIGHT TOUR:

May 28 - [Library of Clean Reads](#)

### Guest Post:

#### How I Became a Writer by Julian Jingles

My career as a writer begun in 1966 at age 16, the same year I graduated from Kingston College, a prominent boys high school in Kingston, Jamaica. I read a lot as a child beginning about age 6, reading the Jamaican evening paper, The Star, and was an avid comic book collector. I was also very observant, and a movie buff from age nine. This molded me into a story teller, both retelling what I read and saw, and making up my own stories.

From I started elementary, now primary, school in the mid-1950s, I was the one who organized play time at break and lunch. Making up the stories, mostly cowboys and Indians, and selecting who to play which character. It was when I was about 14 and in high school, that one of my English teachers commended me before the class after I wrote an assignment doing adaptations of “The 39 Steps” and “The Four Just Men.” By age 15 I knew I had a novel in me and informed my parents that I was going to be a writer and needed a typewriter. Looking back it was very amazing that my working class parents, without any hesitation took me to select a typewriter that they purchased on “hire purchase.” One year later I began work on my manuscript, *A Reason For Living*.

I was initially drawn to writing fiction, and it was upon getting a short story published in The Star and went to the editor of the Gleaner Company that owned both the morning paper, The Gleaner and the evening paper, trying to submit another story for publication, that he asked what were my plans? I told him that I was writing a novel. He told me that I cannot make a living as a writer in Jamaica at age 16, and invited me to apply for work as a journalist with the company. A few months later I had my first job, as a trainee journalist, at age 17.

My mission as a journalist was to seek out truth and facts and report such to the readers, with objectivity. Jamaica was a young independent nation and seeking its path in the world. I took my own path in the journey, focusing on Jamaicans who were establishing their leadership identities in their professional undertakings. I began writing feature articles on outstanding people in young Jamaica. One area that they were excelling in was music, and between 1967 to 1972, I produced many articles on the great talent making Jamaican popular music, namely reggae music, the genre that was to make an indelible mark on world popular music culture. I am credited to be the first journalist to write feature articles on Clement “Coxsone” Dodd, the legendary producer and owner of world renown Studio One Records, and Bob Marley and the Wailers, the phenoms of Jamaican reggae music, that captured world attention.

# iRead Virtual Book Tour

## BOOK SPOTLIGHT TOUR:

May 29 - [Locks, Hooks and Books](#)

### Author Interview

**What made you write a book about Jamaica?** That's where I was then living, and having some dynamic, and important experiences. Jamaican popular musical forms were evolving and influencing world popular culture. I was inspired and motivated by ska, rocksteady and reggae music, and several of the singers and musicians who were creating the music were my friends and associates. For example BB Seaton and the Gaylads, Bob Marley and the Wailers, Jackie Mittoo of the Skatalites.

**Where do you get inspiration for your stories?** From what's happening around me, near and far.

**Your book is set in (Jamaica and Mexico). Have you ever been there?** Yes to Jamaica where I was born, and no to Mexico.

**How did you do research for your book?** By reading newspapers, magazines, and visiting the library. Computer was not in use then.

**In today's tech savvy world, most writers use a computer or laptop. Have you ever written parts of your book on paper?** The original manuscript was written on a manual Smith Corona typewriter, Clipper I think it was named. It was not until in the 1990s that I had someone input it on computer.

**Is there a specific ritualistic thing you do during your writing time?** When I was writing the manuscript of my novel I was mostly nude much of the time. But I don't do that anymore.

**Any hobbies?** Listening to music, watching TV mostly PBS stations, and westerns.

**What advice would you give budding writers?** Read widely and write well.

# iRead Virtual Book Tour

## BOOK SPOTLIGHT TOUR:

June 4 - [Laurie's Thoughts and Reviews](#)

## GUEST POST

### On Homosexuality and Gender Inequality in Jamaica

Homosexuality and gender inequality are prominent in *A Reason For Living*. In the period of the 1960s in which the novel is set in Jamaica, both behaviors were very taboo. Jamaica is today recognized as “a homophobic society,” however it’s not as homophobic as many other countries are, as homosexuals are not beaten and killed as they are elsewhere specially in Muslim influenced nations, except if acts of pedophilia are involved. Because of the deeply religious history of the country, homosexual acts are looked down on as extremely immoral and anti-religious. In the novel there is both male and female homosexuality.

Gender inequality was more widespread in Jamaica than homophobia during the period that the novel is set in. While there were a handful of women in political life, there were virtually no female business leaders. In *A Reason For Living*, one female character, Christine, who indulges in homosexuality is also denied leadership in a big company ran by her father, not because of her sexual preference, but more so her gender. Her father, Old Edmond, laments that his son, Howard, who is younger than his sister, and his nephew, Robin, have other interests above helping in the management of the family’s real estate and development company.

In the complexity of the story unfolding in the novel, Christine becomes a victim of both her homosexual tendencies as well as being a woman engaging with other women in a sport seen only as sport for males, cricket. Although women played an extraordinary role in nurturing and molding the Jamaican family resulting in one book entitled “The Mother Who Fathered Me,” in the national consciousness especially at the working class and peasant classes of the Jamaican society, women played a distant secondary role to men in leading the country, in politics and business.

It is ironic however to note that female homosexuality in that era, and still so today, is more acceptable and accommodated than male homosexuality; and the upper middle class, upper class, and intellectuals indulging in homosexuality are far less frowned on than practioners at the lower rungs of the society.

The book explores these nuances within its complex characters.

# iRead Virtual Book Tour

## **BOOK SPOTLIGHT TOUR:**

### **GUEST POST**

June 5 - [Writers and Authors](#)

#### **Implementing An Effective And Affordable Book Marketing Program For Authors**

It is virtually impossible to implement an effective marketing program if you are an author, self-published with very limited financing available, or backed by a small press, with very limited access to cash for marketing. My experience as a writer and marketer has placed me in a unique position of seeing what is required to execute an effective marketing program to promote and take a good work to the buying public, but not having the financial wherewithal to implement in a substantive way.

It means therefore, that several very interesting books with good sales potential will have floundered miserably, due to weak marketing caused by non-access to financing. This cannot be in the best interest of the society, realizing the optimum good for the nation and its people. How then can this be corrected?

One way is for a literary not-for-profit, social enterprise entity convincing foundations, for example Skoll, Ford, Carnegie-Mellon, Dell, Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Walmart, Rockefeller, Gates, Buffett, to make funding available for qualified applicants to tap into for financial assistance to market their works.

Let's break this out by suggesting this formula. Together, the foundations provide initially \$15,000,000, deduct \$2,000,000 for administration and management by the not-for-profit, leaving \$13,000,000 to be used by 600 authors annually, to market their books. The recipients receiving marketing financing will also contribute to the sustainability of the fund, by paying back a percentage of their earnings, let's say two percent of book sales, from what they will gain from this input.

From my experience, I observe that the author is placed at an enormous disadvantage when called on to put forward money for marketing and promotions, and be placed in great debt with no guarantees that the "investment" in securing reviews, interviews, discussion within the bloggers community will bear fruits to offset the expended resources that would have brought the project from thought to book.

There is yet another approach to enable the author that his or her book will receive a reasonable high degree of effective, professional marketing and promotion; this is

for the not-for-profit administrative entity to directly be engaging in the marketing of the books.

The author at a reasonable fee of let's say \$500 engage the marketers, who would be tapping into the said foundations to obtain funding, to plan and execute the marketing program. And at the end of the engagement the marketing entity be entitled to a percentage of let's say four percent of book sales, resulting from the execution of effective marketing.

As I see what the literary industry is like now in America, authors are put into a prejudiced position, wherein the success of a book is not based on the merits of its content, or of engaging its readers, instead is favored to the authors supported by the establishment publishers with very deep pockets, and years of being connected to the media and public relations communities, or the author who is financially able to secure the required money to implement effective marketing programs.

More people are writing I am told, and this appears to me to be so, and they must be given fair and unbiased opportunities to reach the buying global markets, and so improve not only the literary outflow, but the socio-economic conditions of those not coming from the well-to-do, or with connections to the literary elite. What does it require to get a book reviewed in the New York Times? Who you know, who knows you, how much you can afford?

# iRead Virtual Book Tour

## **BOOK SPOTLIGHT TOUR:**

June 8 - [Olio by Marilyn](#)

### **Interview -**

**Can you please share a bit about your journey to become a published author? Is it a dream you've had from childhood or one that arose as an adult?**

It's a mission I've been on from I began writing at age 16.

**You began this book in the 1960's, but didn't publish it until 52 years later, after working as a journalist and producing documentaries and music videos. Why?**

I engaged an agent in 1967 - Scott Meredith Literary Agency - who were the agents for big guns like President Richard Nixon and Henry Kissinger. Scott and his brother Sydney encouraged me to "keep writing: first for A Reason For Living, and then after telling me that they could not find a publisher for that book, that I continue writing. I had no other book to write, this was the story I had to tell, and over the years, I was able to get it to be read by several literary giants including Toni Morrison when she was at Random House, publishers such as Dell, Fawcett, Viking, all passed on it.

Three times it came close to be published, twice in the mid to late '70s, by "adult book" publishers who wanted me to extract the politics and other matters and just leave "the sex." I refused. And in the 1990s a small black publishing house Gumbs & Thomas was about to publish it, but ran into financial difficulties. The challenge I faced, and still do, is that the tale of a "small island" from a working class perspective is not respected or appreciated by the bourgeoisie that controls the arts, the creative industries be it literature, plays, television, cinema.

**Where did the inspiration for A Reason for Living come from? The inspiration for the characters included in this story?**

From what was being experienced in Jamaica, and the world in the '60s. Several of the characters names were from friends, relatives and associates who I wanted to immortalize. Much of the inspiration also came from the three young ladies acknowledged in the book. Beauty, grace, charms are great inspirations.

**What research did you have to do to bring a sense of reality to the book's location, characters and storyline?**

It was around 70% living experiences written as fiction, and 30% research. The locations are real, the story line 90% fiction, and characters all fiction, only some aliases/nicknames are real.

**How does the writing process work for you? Do you schedule a time every day, work madly when inspiration hits or?**

My experience was like I was on a path, a mission. I wrote religiously every day, from around 6 AM to 6 PM, with time out for breakfast, lunch, dinner which didn't last more than 30 mins. each. I would spend two hours early morning around 4 AM, going over in my mind what was done the day before, and the direction to go in when I commenced writing later that day.

**As an author - what do you enjoy most about the writing process? What feels like a chore?**

I enjoyed everything. Nothing is a chore, except making sure the grammar is correct.

**What would you most like readers to know about you?**

I was born with a strong sense of vision, and a gift to write. I read voraciously from age 6 to about 23. And I read widely from poetry to, fiction, to politics, war, business, comics, newspapers and magazines. By age 17 I had consumed literary greats such as Miller, Spillane, Christie, Lawrence, Robbins, Tennyson, Livingstone, Shakespeare, Sheridan, Baldwin, Hughes, McKay, Mais, Blake, Russell, Brown as in Sterling.

**Do you have any new books in development?**

Yes, a compilation of my works, articles, essays, poems, short stories between 1968 when I began being published with a byline, to the present.

**Lastly, can you please share any advice you might have for other writers working on their first book?**

Read widely and write well.