

**THE ROBERT B. PARKER ESTATE AND LONG-TIME PUBLISHER G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS STRIKE A DEAL TO CONTINUE PUBLICATION OF PARKER'S TOP BEST-SELLING SERIES, SPENSER AND JESSE STONE, WITH NEW AUTHORS**

***Michael Brandman, Producer and Screenwriter of the CBS-TV "Jesse Stone" Movies, to Take Over Jesse Stone Novels in September 2011; Putnam Crime Novelist Ace Atkins to Continue Spenser Series in Spring 2012***

New York, New York, April 27, 2011 ... The Robert B. Parker estate and his long-time publisher G. P. Putnam's Sons have come together to strike a deal that will allow Parker's top best-selling series, Spenser (39 novels since 1974) and Jesse Stone (9 novels since 1997), to continue in the hands of two new, highly respected and accomplished writers, Michael Brandman and Ace Atkins.

Joan Parker, Robert's widow, and his soul-mate since they met as teenagers in Massachusetts in the early 1950s, expressed her enthusiasm for the new arrangement with Putnam and the new authors: "I am delighted that the worlds of Spenser and Jesse Stone will live on in the capable, talented hands of such gifted writers," she stated. "Through the Jesse Stone television movies, our dear friend Michael Brandman knows Jesse perhaps better than anyone other than Bob. And what an inspired choice Ace Atkins is! An established author of his own franchises, he is a true Spenser fan who possesses an extraordinary understanding and reverence for the characters Bob created. I am sure all Spenser and Jesse Stone fans will share my excitement for what is to come."

Ivan Held, president of G. P. Putnam's Sons, noted that "It is exciting to think that we can keep these two iconic characters that Bob invented going with the deft touches of our new authors, Michael Brandman and Ace Atkins –under the eye of Bob's longtime editor Chris Pepe. They have truly captured the voice that gave - and still gives - so many readers great pleasure."

Robert B. Parker, who authored more than 60 novels between 1974 and 2010, most of them national best-sellers, passed away in January of 2010, after which his last few completed novels were published posthumously by Putnam. The final work, *Sixkill*, the 39th entry in the beloved Spenser series about the now-legendary Boston private detective who goes only by his surname, will appear on May 3. Parker also wrote nine novels featuring Massachusetts police chief Jesse Stone, along with a number of well-received Westerns and other crime and suspense works. Among his many other awards, Parker was awarded the prestigious Grand Master designation by the Mystery Writers of America in 2002.

Michael Brandman, a long-time collaborator of Robert B. Parker's, will write the first new Parker-brand book, a Jesse Stone novel. Brandman is a long-established Hollywood producer and screenwriter who, with actor Tom Selleck, both co-wrote and produced the CBS television movies featuring Selleck as Parker's creation Jesse Stone, a small-town Massachusetts police chief, in such films as *Stone Cold*, *Night Passage*, *Sea Change* and *Death in Paradise*, and earlier also produced three adaptations of Parker's Spenser novels for the A&E network. Brandman's first Jesse Stone novel is entitled *Robert B. Parker's Killing the Blues*, which will be published on September 13, 2011. Brandman had this to say about inheriting the Parker legacy as the new author of the Jesse Stone series:

"Bob Parker and I collaborated on some eleven movies...seven Jesse Stones; three Spensers and Monte Walsh, a western starring Tom Selleck; writing that one was a major hoot. Selleck of course would go on to master the role of Jesse Stone years later for our CBS movies. Bob was a total original. Whether we were writing together or he was acting, as he did so memorably as the superspy Ives in A&E's *Small Vices*, or pounding the Hollywood pavement pitching ideas, he always maintained an ironic distance, the ability to comedically comment on anything and everything.

"It's an amazing honor to succeed him in writing the Jesse Stone novels. Bob set the bar stunningly high and by so doing, threw down the gauntlet for his successors. Although I welcome this challenge, the truth is I'd much rather be sitting across from him in some restaurant, gabbing, chomping and laughing with him like we were a pair of lunatics. He was a great man and I loved him."

Ace Atkins, who will be continuing as the new author of the best-selling Spenser series, is already well-established with the Putnam imprint, having authored a number of well-received novels based on historical crimes and criminals, including *White Shadow*, *Infamous* and *Wicked City*. Of his work, *USA Today* enthused, "Atkins is an astute observer of life as well as a singular voice in fiction," while *The Chicago Tribune* called him "a major player in the mystery genre."

Atkins, who lives in Oxford, Mississippi, noted: "I am thrilled and honored to be continuing such an iconic series. I've been a Robert B. Parker fan since high school; reading Spenser is what inspired me to become a crime novelist. Years ago, my mom waited in a long line at a book signing in Atlanta to get a copy of *Double Deuce* signed by Parker for my 21st birthday. The inscription he wrote is when I first learned Bob's nickname was Ace. It's still one of my prized possessions. For me and a ton of readers, Spenser occupies that fourth chair at a table shared by Sam Spade, Philip Marlowe, and Lew Archer. There are plenty of imitations but only one Spenser."

Atkins has his own new crime series featuring Army Ranger Quinn Colson debuting in June 2011 with *The Ranger*. His first Spenser novel will be released in the Spring of 2012.

Chris Pepe, Parker's longtime editor at G. P. Putnam, recalled, "I started working with Bob Parker as a young editor more than twenty-three years ago. Although I was new to the publishing world, I knew Bob: he had long been one of my father's literary idols, and therefore became one of mine. How lucky for me, then, to work with him for all those years, on forty-seven incredible books. He was an absolute joy, and clearly very patient: he's the one who really taught me to be an editor, and so I owe him a tremendous debt. I'm thrilled that we have found two such talented writers to carry on Bob's work; they respect and understand the characters of Spenser and Jesse, and are ideal stewards to bring both series into the future."

Parker's agent of four decades, Helen Brann, who had represented Parker ever since his first book, the 1974 Spenser debut *The Godwulf Manuscript*, noted, "I was honored to be Bob Parker's literary agent for forty years and the future of his legacy, all those books, written with the wit, observation, irony and wisdom unique to Bob's brilliant talent is very important to me. Who could possibly measure up? Capture that voice, the humor, the smarts? Do justice to the iconic character, Spenser, and the complex Jesse?"

"Amazed, excited for the future, and grateful I am that Putnam's has found Michael Brandman to write Jesse Stone and Ace Atkins to write Spenser. These two writers are both gifted and as Robert B. Parker fans will see, they capture the essence of these characters and will carry their stories forward in great style. It shows on every page they write that Michael and Ace have enormous respect and love for Bob's work. His legacy is safe with them."

## **AUTHOR BIOS**

### **ROBERT B. PARKER:**

Robert B. Parker, the bestselling, award-winning author of more than 45 books for Penguin Group (USA)'s G. P. Putnam's Sons and Berkley Books imprints, died suddenly on January 18, 2010 at his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts. He was seventy-seven. Long acknowledged as the dean of American crime fiction, Mr. Parker was named Grand Master of the Edgar Awards in 2002 by the Mystery Writers of America, an honor shared with earlier masters such as Alfred Hitchcock and Ellery Queen.

He was renowned for his Spenser novels, featuring the wise-cracking, street-smart Boston private-eye, which earned him a devoted following and reams of critical acclaim. Mr. Parker also launched two other bestselling series featuring, respectively, Massachusetts police chief Jesse Stone and Boston private detective Sunny Randall. In addition, Mr. Parker authored four Westerns. Mr. Parker's bestselling Western novel *Appaloosa* was made into a major motion picture by New Line, starred Ed Harris and Vigo Mortensen, and was a box office hit in 2008.

Mr. Parker was born on September 17, 1932 in Springfield, Massachusetts. He graduated from Boston University, where he received his Masters and PhD. He was married to his wife Joan H. Parker for fifty-three years. They attended Colby College together, and they were married in 1956, after Mr. Parker completed his Army service in Korea. They have two sons, David, a dancer/choreographer, and Daniel, an actor. Mr. Parker dedicated most of the 60-plus books he wrote to his wife and once said, "Joan has been the central factor in my life since I was a child. You wouldn't understand me unless you understand me and her."

### **MICHAEL BRANDMAN:**

Michael Brandman grew up in South Orange, New Jersey. He studied Theatre at Carnegie Institute of Technology. Brandman was the first Director of Program Development for HBO. He now lives in Los Angeles, California, with his wife, the actress Joanna Miles. He has two sons.

Along with Tom Selleck, Brandman both wrote and produced a series of movies for CBS based on the bestselling Jesse Stone novels written by Robert B. Parker. These include "STONE COLD," "NIGHT PASSAGE," "DEATH IN PARADISE," "THIN ICE," "SEA CHANGE," "NO REMORSE" and "INNOCENTS LOST." He also produced adaptations of three Spenser novels written by Robert B. Parker, "WALKING SHADOW," "SMALL VICES," and "THIN AIR."

### **ACE ATKINS:**

Ace Atkins is the author of nine novels, including The Ranger, the debut novel in the Quinn Colson series, from G.P. Putnam's Sons.

A former journalist who cut his teeth as a crime reporter in the newsroom of The Tampa Tribune, he published his first novel, Crossroad Blues, at 27 and became a full-time novelist at 30. While at the Tribune, Ace earned a Pulitzer Prize nomination for a feature series based on his investigation into a forgotten murder of the 1950s. The story became the core of his critically acclaimed novel, White Shadow, which earned raves from noted authors and critics. In his next novels, Wicked City, Devil's Garden, and Infamous, blended first-hand interviews and original research into police and court records with tightly woven plots and incisive characters. The historical novels told great American stories by weaving fact and fiction into a colorful, seamless tapestry.

The Ranger represents a return to Ace's first love: hero-driven series fiction. Quinn Colson is a real hero—a veteran of Iraq and Afghanistan—who returns home to north Mississippi to fight corruption on his home turf. The first Quinn Colson novel, a contemporary book with a dash of classic westerns and noir, hits stores in summer 2011.

Ace lives on a historic farm outside Oxford, Mississippi with his family.