

Ask the Author

Richard MacAndrew responds to questions about *Blood Diamonds*

Q. Did the film *Blood Diamonds* inspire the book or vice versa?

A. I wrote the book before I knew about the film, so the film did not inspire the book. I'd like to think that the book inspired the film but I don't think that's likely either! I feel sure that Leonardo Di Caprio has never read my book, nor the writers of the screenplay.

Q. Have you seen the film and if so, did you like it?

A. I have seen the film. I thought it was good.

Q. Is the film the same as the book?

A. The film is very different from the book. In fact the stories are not similar at all. The only thing the same is the subject.

Q. Why did you choose to write about this subject?

A. When I was thinking about writing the book, there were many stories in the newspapers about *Blood Diamonds*. It seemed a good subject to write about. It was also a subject that I wanted to say something about.

Q. What is the message of the book?

A. When you buy diamonds, make sure you know where they come from. You could be buying guns and helping people fight a war.

Q. Did you base the book on a true story?

A. No. It all came from my imagination.

Q. Were you once a journalist?

A. No. I've always been a teacher or a writer.

Q. How long did it take you to write the book?

A. I can't really remember. The story changed two or three times while I was writing it. I also had to make sure that all the language was simple enough for the level of the book. A few weeks, maybe.

Q. Have you written other books?

A. Yes, I've written a number of other stories for Cambridge University Press, including some about a detective in Edinburgh called Jenny Logan; and some about a spy called Ian Munro.

Q. And here's a personal one, which you can choose to ignore! How old are you?

A. Older than I feel!