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"Imminent mayhem and timeless patience" (Is James LePore talking about Paris, dads and daughters, or his debut novel?)

Posted by Joni Rodgers at [12:31 AM](#)

The first page of James LePore's ***A World I Never Made*** has us reading over the shoulder of American Pat Nolan as he tries to make sense of the suicide note written by his daughter, Megan. He's understandably shaken, having just identified her body in a French morgue. We're understandably shaken when we realize the dead girl is not Nolan's daughter.

With the help of a savvy French detective, Nolan learns that Megan, a freelance journalist, is tangled in a dangerous affair with a Saudi businessman and that her life is just one of millions at risk. As one who loves Paris as much as I love a good mystery, I thoroughly enjoyed chasing down every twist, turn, and dark alley from the Marais to Morocco to the Czech Republic. *A World I Never Made* does everything the Bourne books do: the story intrigues, the characters engage, the locations are literally a trip, and the plot bombs don't stop detonating until the very last page.

Small press The Story Plant will launch the book in hardcover next week, and **according to publisher Lou Aronica**, buzz is good so far. LePore, a practicing attorney and photographer, lives in South

Salem, NY with his wife, artist [Karen Chandler](#). First novel set to launch. Second novel in the pipeline. I figured we'd better get him to sit down with us for a minute before things get crazy.

Before we get down to business, James, how are you? Well and happy and enjoying the First Book ride, I hope.

I alternate between being nervous and elated, but one thing is certain: it's a dream come true.

Tell us about the genesis of this book. Has it been in your head for a while?

I had written two other novels and although they had not gotten published, I was determined to keep on writing. One night I was told a very sad story about a young woman who had committed suicide and left a taped message to each of her parents and siblings. This woman had been seemingly happy. But what if she had had reason to be angry at one of her loved ones? What was on those cassettes? What story did they tell?

I have good relationships with my daughters, but I got to thinking about a father-daughter relationship that had gone wrong, that had given the daughter reason to be bitter, and angry at her father. And I got to thinking about redemption and the ways it might be offered to us.

This is the genesis of *A World I Never Made*.

I loved the high mileage of this novel, especially passages set in Paris and Tangiers, two places I love. Familiar neighborhoods rang perfectly clear. I'm curious to know about your travels and why these two particular places speak so strongly to you.

Paris is very hip, but it is its combination of hipness and ancientness--its charm and beauty unchanged for centuries--that to me makes it such a great city. In North Africa I was struck repeatedly by the crazy juxtaposition of imminent mayhem and timeless patience. These are inherently dramatic and romantic places, the perfect settings I think for a story that involves the dramatic and romantic alteration of peoples' lives.

Tell us about "God's Warriors" and the other stories you'll be featuring on your web site. Are these stories you wrote to expand on the book or are they "killed darlings" cut from the original manuscript?

These are not killed darlings. The publisher asked me to write them as a way of helping create the universe of the novel for the website. I was somewhat surprised, but very happy, to find that I knew more about the characters than I thought I did. I believe that the people who read them will come away with a better understanding of what motivated Pat and Megan, for example, to be the people they were, to do the things they did, in the novel. In the novel the reader is basically told (with some showing in the way of flashbacks) that Pat was not a good father to Megan. Is this believable? If you read *Till Death Do*

Us Part, a story that takes place while Pat and his beautiful young wife Lorrie are on their honeymoon, I believe you will see just what he lost and why he behaved as he did after her death.

It's striking how certain elements that brand your photography also brand your writing voice: urban sensibilities, fashion savvy, the strong undercurrent of mystery. (If it's possible for colors to be dangerous, yours are.) How does that crossover work for you? Do the images and words inform each other, or are they coming from completely separate hemispheres?

I think you're right. The two sides of my brain must somehow see the same things but express them differently. The really good thing is that the crossover as you call it is a huge help when I'm describing a person or a scene in my writing. I call upon the things I know that make a good photograph and use them to write descriptively.

There's quite a PR campaign planned for the book. Did you bring in outside help or is it all being generated by the publisher?

The publisher, in house and by outsourcing, has done it all.

Thanks again for your time, James. We wish you great success with this book and all that lies ahead. Before we send you back to the creative salt mine, I have to ask, what are you

reading?

I am reading two things at the moment. *The Wanderers* by Richard Price and *Indian Summer* by Alex Von Tunzelmann. No one captures the rawness of New York's mean streets quite like Price. *Indian Summer* is a history, dramatically written, of India's fight for independence from Great Britain and the breakup of old India into India and Pakistan. I highly recommend them both.

(To see James LePore's unique imagery, [visit Naked Eye Images.](#))