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TV CRIME DRAMA LEGEND PENS FIRST NOVEL . . . IN HIS EIGHTIES ~ *The Hurricane's Tail* is a masterful thriller from Bergerac creator Robert Banks Stewart ~

Veteran TV producer and screenwriter Robert Banks Stewart — creator of hit 1980s TV detective shows *Bergerac* and *Shoestring* — has penned his first novel, a fast-paced thriller, at the age of 81.

The Hurricane's Tail is a compelling and deftly-plotted thriller from one of television's most celebrated scriptwriters. Set between London, Paris and the Caribbean, the page-turner features a British detective uncovering a sinister political plot against the prime minister of a Caribbean island.

In Detective Sergeant Harper Buchanan, the protagonist of *The Hurricane's Tale*, Stewart has created a unique and fascinating new character to rank alongside Eddie Shoestring and Jim Bergerac — the fictional detectives he created who, between the late 1970s and early '90s, kept millions of viewers glued to their TV sets each week.

As the son of ambitious West Indian immigrant parents, Buchanan is one of a small number of modern ethnic cops gradually gaining more rapid promotion to the higher ranks of London's police force, the Met. However, to his great annoyance, he is suddenly pulled off normal duties to act as bodyguard to Sir Walter Julien — Prime Minister of a leading Caribbean island — who is under a death threat.

Sir Walter is due in London to undergo a complicated heart operation. What irks Harper is to be assigned to a 24-hour role he considers boringly routine, undoubtedly because the powers that be judge him to be a 'cop of the right colour'. But it turns out to be much more than just the “nanny” protection job Harper thought it would be, as he is drawn into a wider, more sinister world code-named “Operation Hurricane”.

Harper will encounter many dangers and surprises during his mission to the West Indies, not least in the attractive shape of cigar-smoking French detective Charlotte Plennard.

Stewart — whose prime-time BBC series *Bergerac*, starring John Nettles as the Jersey-based detective, gained audiences of up to 18 million in its heyday — first envisaged *The Hurricane's Tail* as a two-part TV thriller.

But the writer, who also wrote for popular TV programmes including *The Avengers*, *Doctor Who*, *The Darling Buds of May* and *Lovejoy*, says that he decided to turn it into his first novel after with “getting nowhere” with TV executives — something he puts down to ageism.

He said: “I always intended Detective Sergeant Harper Buchanan, the main character of my novel, to be the lead character in a TV series, but pitching to various BBC executives in my late 70s was like talking to a brick wall.

“Based on my experience I would say ageism is, unfortunately, common in the TV industry. It seems that if you're over seventy then TV chiefs take it as read that you are too long in the tooth for today's audiences and can't possibly have come up with a possible winner.

“I've never written a novel before — never had the need to — but in the end it was the only way to make sure my thriller reached the public. It's been described as a perfect 'holiday' read but I'll let readers decide for themselves if I've still got the touch.”

The book, released through Kaleidoscope Publishing, has since received praise from celebrities including TV presenter Sir Trevor McDonald and John Nettles.

McDonald said: “The author knows a thing or two about pace and tension, and paints an effortlessly true picture of how some Caribbean islands can be engulfed in political corruption. A superb thriller, utterly compelling.”

Actor Nettles added: “If you want a wise, human cop, this is your book. Simply the most interesting 'tec to appear in print for years.”

The Hurricane's Tail is available now, priced £9.99 in paperback and £5.99 as a Kindle ebook. For more information visit www.kaleidoscopepublishing.co.uk
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NOTES TO EDITORS

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