

How to Fuel Your Writing Ideas

by D.V. Berkom

Alien monster eats Prime Minister's Brain!

Woman Gives Birth to Rottweiler Quintuplets!

Nostradamus Predicts End of the World is Near!

Okay, so maybe I don't write from these kinds of headlines, but the possibilities are intriguing, no?

Actually, the truth is far more interesting to me and spins all kinds of ideas through my ever crowded imagination. For instance, at one point I read something about AI (artificial intelligence), and a short story about a computer geek and his empathic computer was born. Reading about the budget crisis spawned the rough draft of a novel dealing with Earth having its funding cut. Another time I watched breaking news of modern-day pirates boarding a ship and holding everyone for ransom, which spawned a novel with similar elements.

It's endless.

One type of headline in particular kept getting my attention: the drug war south of our border. I lived in Mexico for a time, and grew to love the people (and climate!), so when reports of the escalating violence between the rival drug cartels started getting attention in the media, I knew I had to write about it. As a result, my serialized e-novella, *BAD SPIRITS*, was born. *BAD SPIRITS* deals with a woman running for her life from a brutal Mexican drug lord, and deals with issues I find endlessly fascinating like trust, fear, love, and betrayal.

Having also lived in Arizona, the issue of illegal immigration crept into the series. It's not an overriding element in the story, but it informed much of what I wrote in the first installment.

Where do you get your inspiration? Is it from the headlines? A book you recently read? An idea that just won't leave you alone until you get something written down? For me, idea generation is easily one of the most exciting components of writing fiction.

I think I feel a dystopian, end-of-days short story coming on about an alien woman pregnant with Rottweiler puppies who craves the brains of politicians...