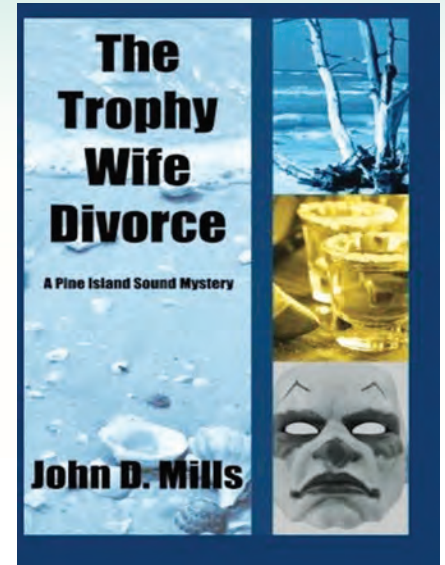


Book Review

Review by Marcy Shortuse

'The Trophy Wife Divorce'

by John D. Mills



When Dr. Stan Jacoby walked in the door of his estate on the Caloosahatchee River to surprise his wife with an early return from a golfing vacation, he was confronted with a life-changing realization: What's good for the gander, is truly also good for the goose. The "goose" in this case, Karen Jacoby, is Stan's wife, and the compromising position she was found in by her husband begins a tale of debauchery and distrust that rivals any Kardashian real-life drama found on reality television. The primary protagonist, Attorney Beth Mancini, is Karen's divorce attorney, and she has been featured in other books written by author, Attorney John D. Mills of Fort Myers. He spins the tale with a good amount of historical information about Cayo Costa and Boca Grande: A lot of the locations mentioned will strike a familiar chord with readers ... and perhaps some of the characters.

Mills is a fifth generation native of Fort Myers who has been fishing local waters since he was a child. He graduated from Mercer University in Macon, Georgia with a BBA in finance, and worked for Lee County Bank in Fort Myers for five months. He returned to Macon and graduated from Mercer's Law School in 1989 and started his legal career as a prosecutor for the State Attorney's Office in Fort Myers.

In 1990 he opened his own private practice, concentrating in divorce and criminal defense.

Mills said he first became interested in writing after reading Randy Wayne White's books with familiar settings around our barrier islands.

"I grew up here and loved fishing in Pine Island Sound whenever I could," he said. "I remember reading Randy's books describing a spot and thinking, 'I've been there! I know what he's describing!'"

Mills, who has always been a big reader, said it was a very different experience reading about places he had been that were featured in a story of intrigue and excitement. It inspired him to start writing his own murder mysteries/legal thrillers that are set on the islands around Pine Island Sound.

As the "Trophy Wife" story initially evolves, the reader is caught up in the daily grind of a hideous divorce, starting with mediation, where Mills' professional background shines through. A classic trophy wife, a typical older husband who compiled a mountain of money with an inheritance from his parents and sound decisions made with an IPO by a little-known company called Google ... there are misdeeds and backbiting a-plenty ... but then a "slap yo' Mama" moment happens and the attitude of the entire book changes very quickly when Beth and Karen show up

at Karen's Cayo Costa beach house after a dinner at Cabbage Key.

Beth walked to the back of the boat and grabbed the rear line with the end tied to the port cleat. She picked it up and threw it to Karen, who had walked down the dock. Karen tied the line to the nearest piling and said, "The boat is secure for the night. Are we ready for a night cap on the widow's walk?"

"Definitely," Beth said, and looked at the stars for a second. Beth stepped out of the boat and walked with Karen down the dock. A mother raccoon and her four babies walked across the shell pathway at the end of the dock, glancing cautiously toward the women before continuing their nightly forage. As Beth stepped on the shell pathway, she heard a mosquito buzz in her ear, and she swatted it away.

"Once we get up to the widow's walk, the breeze will keep the mosquitoes away. There are always a few down by the mangroves," Karen said as she walked faster toward the cottage. Beth followed Karen's pace as she slapped one on her left forearm and heard

another buzz in her ear. The smell of the night blooming jasmine eased Beth's irritation at the pesky bugs as they approached the stairs illuminated by yellow bug lights on the covered entryway. They scampered up the steps two at a time and quickly went in the screen door.

"Now I understand the screens," Beth said as she swatted one remaining pest on her right hand.

"A pain at night, but they'll be gone tomorrow when we go fishing with the guide," Karen said as she pulled her keys from

her pocket.

As Karen unlocked the front door, Beth took a deep breath and relaxed. She was tipsy from the margaritas and was certain one more on the widow's walk would be just right. Karen went inside first and hit the two light switches on the right wall, turning on the overhead light by the door and a lamp on the far side of the room. Karen stopped in her tracks, stiffened and gasped.

Beth heard a strange male voice say, "I've been waitin' for both of ya."

From that point on, the tale moves quickly to end with a twist that not many will expect.

Mills has fond memories of family time in the island of Cayo Costa. In the 1970s his family owned an old stilt house out in open

water on the sound side of Punta Blanca Island, near Cayo Costa. It was one of the three old stilt houses burnt down in a 10-day span in July of 1995, when the net ban went into effect and someone appeared to be "protesting" it by burning down three of the stilt fishing houses in a 10-day period. Sadly, Mills said, they never



caught the responsible party.

"When my family owned the old stilt house, which we called 'The Shack,' we were out there just about every weekend fishing," Mills said. "I loved going to the old phosphate docks to catch grouper and snapper. Sometimes, we walked the trails of Cayo Costa and explored the area looking for buried pirate gold. This was the inspiration for my seventh novel, 'Pineland Gold,' that involved a murder at the Pineland Indian Mounds, looking for rumored buried pirate gold hidden there."



Mills' fishing boat.

Mills looked back at his first book, "Reasonable and Necessary" that was published in 2000. It involves a murder of a doctor being sued for malpractice who was tarpon fishing in Boca Grande, he said. A bomb was detonated on a charter boat to make it look like a "boating accident" to hide the actual reasons for the murder. His second book, "The Manatee Murders," was written in 2002 and involves three beheaded manatees that are discovered floating in Pine Island Sound. Detective Doug Shearer, a Lee County detective, investigates the decapitations starting with local commercial fisherman who is arrested. "The Objector" is the third book Mills wrote in 2004, featuring Lee County Sheriff's Office Detective Doug Shearer, who vacations with his girlfriend at a Cabbage Key fishing tournament, and discovers a body floating in the water. In 2007 Mills wrote "Sworn Jury," where a lawyer is found murdered in a Model T Ford in the historic Edison Home.

After The Trophy Wife Divorce - his fifth book - Mills wrote "The Hooker, the Dancer and the Nun" in 2016, "Pineland Gold" in 2017 and "Cayo Costa Cross" in 2019.

"Cayo Costa Cross" is a modern-day divorce fighting over a 100-year-old letter describing a buried gold cross near the cemetery on Cayo Costa," Mills said. "Ironically, the prologue is set in 1910 near the Cayo Costa quarantine dock, on the northeast end of the island. All ships had to stay at anchor for 14 days to check for tuberculosis and yellow fever before they could enter the port of Boca Grande. My character had to escape the quarantine to bury a gold cross because some people were trying to steal the cross from him."



Author, John D. Mills

A question that arises in most minds would obviously be where Mills gets his ideas. As a practicing attorney, it must be difficult to keep the line between reality and fiction straight, after all.

"I get ideas for my books from three main places," he said. "The first would be my actual court cases and other cases I have watched over the years at the Lee County Courthouse. The second place would be happy hours with my friends at fishing tournaments at

Cabbage Key and Tween Waters. The third would be my imagination."

Mills said he has recently started research for his ninth book, which involves the murder of a witch on Captiva. Stay tuned. For more information, go to pineislandsoundmysteries.com. All of his books can be found on Amazon.com.

