

Interview with Eddie Jones, Author of *The Curse of Captain LaFoote*

Eddie Jones is a full time freelance writer and author of five non-fiction books, one young adult novel, and one adult romantic comedy. He has written over one hundred articles that have appeared in twenty different publications. He serves as Acquisition Editor for Lighthouse Publishing of the Carolinas and is a contributing writer for CBN.com, Christian Devotions Ministries, *Living Aboard Magazine*, *The Ocracoke Observer*, and *Carolina Currents*. He has taught writing classes from Pennsylvania and the Carolinas to Colorado.

Please tell us a little about yourself.

EDDIE: Met my wife at a stop light in West Palm Beach, Florida. She was in the backseat of the car behind us. The driver honked and I crawled out the passenger window. (Brown Pinto WITHOUT the NASCAR netting but WITH the "stuck" NASCAR doors.) The car was full of Meredith College girls. Told them I went to Meredith, too. "It's a girl's school, you dork," one of them said. I explained I was taking an Old Testament class that semester. Another girl leaned forward, pointed and said: "Hey! You're in my class!" Light turned green and we parted ways. Driving home a week later we came upon the same car in the slow lane of I-95 and followed it home. I married that girl in the back seat four years later. We have two boys, one in grad school at State, the other at App St. We also have a smelly dog whose shrimp breath appears in my book.

What do you enjoying doing when you're not writing?

EDDIE: I'm a boat swab at heart, and a thief and liar when honest work proves unprofitable. This is why when my boys were little (and by this I mean we could still feed them without maxing-out our credit cards at the grocery store or causing a world-wide food shortage) I'd tell them pirate stories on our sailboat. I no longer have a sailboat. What I have instead are two boys in college. This is way better than a boat because unlike owning a boat, college tuition payments end-if not upon graduation then when the free frat parties stop. Boat alimony, on the other hand, goes on forever. I'm sure in some way, Noah is still paying on the Ark. B.O.A.T., by the way, means: "Break Out Another Thousand." But if you've ever owned a boat you know this.

Can you tell us any fun thing about you that might surprise our readers?

EDDIE: My high school English teacher told me I shouldn't apply to college, that my grammar skills were weak. She was right. I flunked English 101 twice before passing with a D. I graduated from N.C. State four years later with a degree in English/Journalism. I'm still lousy at copy-editing. Can't proof my own work and I scatter the seeds of typos throughout my manuscript. They don't sprout until months later, usually under the intense glare of an acquisition editor's lamp.

How did you get involved in writing?

EDDIE: Worked on my high school newspaper. Wrote for my college newspaper, *The Technician*. Earned a degree in English and continued to write part-time after college. Couple of years ago I began writing full time. I make less than I did selling toilet paper but I started at the bottom and worked my way up there, too.

Where do you write? Do you have a dedicated office or a corner or nook in a room?

EDDIE: Upstairs office just down the hall from our bedroom. Each morning I boot up my laptop, go downstairs, turn on the coffee, get the paper, fix my coffee and come back up to write. If I'm working on a novel--and I'm always working on a novel--I create 1000 new words a day.

Do you always know the title of your books before you write them?

EDDIE: So far, yes. The title keeps me on track. Right now I'm working on: *Dixie Chicken* (adult romance), *Dead Calm, Bone Dry* (Young Adult), and *The Hill Top Ghost Ranch Mystery* (Middle Grade).

Please tell us about *The Curse of Captain LaFoote*.

EDDIE: When my boys were young, I'd tell pirate stories on the bow of our sailboat. The lead character was Captain Stinky Foot. Captain Stinky Foot was named after my youngest son. If you've ever spent any time on a boat in August with a crew of unwashed young males then this needs no further explanation. I've always been fascinated by the stories of boys snatched away from London and Bristol and forced to serve before the mast. Seems to me life at sea was more fun than peeling potatoes. And more dangerous.

The Curse of Captain LaFoote is a pirate tale awash in buried treasure, romance and dead men's bones. The truth is, this book and the ones that follow in the Caribbean Chronicle series are love stories. For Ricky Bradshaw, the hero of the book, the story is a quest to find his father, soul mate, and purpose in life. For guys, finding their father and gaining his approval is huge. Finding love and legacy are high on the list, too.

The book is a teen/tweens with a PG 13 rating due to a few killings. You know it was with pirates. The age of the lead is 15. It's a pirate romance so while I aimed to attract boys I think girls will enjoy it, too. The female is a strong character.

What takeaway value do you hope readers receive after reading this novel?

EDDIE: There are a lot of other deep and important themes explored in the book too. Things like what the poop deck is and why cruise ships no longer use them, the secrets inside Davy Jones' locker, and why you shouldn't walk downwind of a pirate who's just eaten turtle soup. Seriously, my goal in writing this book was to spur the imagination of young readers. Boys especially. According to KidSay Market Researchers, teen and tween online video and virtual gaming increased from 65% in 2007 to 91% in 2010. I'm a writer, not a math whiz, so I have no idea what those numbers mean but they sound really scary. So part of my goal is to give boys a compelling story they can fall into. I wanted to create within them a desire to read and set sail for a life of adventure, wherever that journey may take them. Even now I can see Ricky standing on the sugar-white sands of that island just south of Hispaniola. I am that boy. And so are a lot of other boys.

But the book is more than just a fun read. It's a cure for global warming, partisan politics and plantar warts.

Where did you get the idea for your book?

EDDIE: The idea for the first book came from the Jimmy Buffett song, "A Pirate Looks at Forty." As a boat and beach bum I've always longed to go back to the days before timeshare condos ruined the Caribbean islands. With cheap airfare anyone can get to the tropics now. But in the old days, when air travel was still exotic and fun and passengers were still viewed as people not terrorists, you could only fly to the larger islands. If you wanted to see the smaller islands you had to rent a boat. So I wanted to send a modern-day boy back to the era of pirates and see how he'd fare. He has contemporary knowledge but lacks the skills the old sailors had. He teaches them basketball; they teach him how to hear his father's voice calling to him on the wind.

Did you need to do any research for this book?

EDDIE: None. Zip. I've stood watch at night and spent enough days at sea to know the thrill of sailing into a port for the first time.

How long have you been writing? When did you sell your first book?

EDDIE: Been writing for forty years. Sold my first book in 1988, I think.

You teach online writing courses. Please tell us a little about that.

EDDIE: In addition to writing, I also coach writers and teach writing. As part of Christian Devotions Ministries, we launched WritersCoach.us. We offer one-on-one mentoring and online writing classes. I teach plotting, scene development, dialogue and character development. I also teach devotional writing and humor writing, plus ways to market your book, get interviews, endorsements, and launch an eBook. About the only thing I don't teach is...GRAMMER!

How do you find time to write?

EDDIE: I write on my novels from 7:30 to 11:30 each morning. In the afternoon I ghostwrite, work on freelance work and market my book and Christian Devotions Ministries. After my nap, I return to my writing, take a walk and finish up.

What are you working on now?

EDDIE: This month I'm working on *Dead Calm, Bone Dry*, the second book in the Caribbean Chronicles series. My agent is pitching *Dixie Chicken* and *The Hill Top Ghost Ranch Mystery*. I'm certain any day she'll email me to say we have a contract for one of both of these. I've heard of these things happening: that agents call with multiple book contracts. But then I also hear the Great Recession ended two years ago so maybe I should get my hearing checked.

Please tell our readers where they can get your book.

EDDIE: www.captainlafoote.com
Become a Facebook Fan of the Caribbean Chronicles series. Learn more about *The Curse of Captain LaFoote* at www.captainlafoote.com. If you're a teacher, home

school parent, or young lad or lass who love adventure and romance, email Eddie at: eddie@eddiejones.org. Maybe he can come to speak to your school or group.

Apply to be a pirate! We're also lookin' fer crew to sail aboard the *Black Avenger* in our next novel, ***Dead Calm, Bone Dry***. No experience required. We'll teach ya how ter talk like a pirate, sail like a crusty seaman and steal from the devil. We may even invite ya to go treasure hunting with us on the Outer Banks of North Carolina. Join our crew for a chance to win prizes AND (maybe) be a lead character (or a dead one) in our next book.

Where can our readers find you?

EDDIE: www.CaptainLaFoote.com

www.EddieJones.org

www.WritersCoach.us

Note: A portion of the proceeds from the sale of each ***The Curse of Captain LaFoote*** book goes to the Epilepsy Foundation in honor of Ricky Bradshaw, the hero of the Caribbean Chronicles series. (Ricky suffers from epilepsy.)