



## A novel approach

It is said there is a book in all of us but it's finding the time and inspiration that proves a stumbling block for most . . . .

> WORDS BY PAULINE FRASER

. . .but Aberdonian Lance Black has drawn on his knowledge of Aberdeen and law along with his own terrifying experience of crime to give birth to his first novel 'Direct Action'.

The crime thriller, launched in November, is a dark, gritty murder tale set in Aberdeen, which graphically dissects the despair caused by drugs, criminals and anti-social behaviour. It reached No. 1 on Waterstone's Bestseller list in Aberdeen. However this book comes with a warning – if you're offended by sex and violence then don't read it.

There are parts of Direct Action which leave you squirming and shuddering as you begin to imagine the horror being portrayed, and there are moments in which you will involuntarily gasp in disbelief, there's also a sexy, romantic edge too, combined with a good story and a great ending.

Lance, who has a Degree in Law, as well as Physics and a Masters in Science, said the idea for the plot arose after he was attacked in his car and a friend had his

nose broken in what's referred to as a 'happy slapping' incident on Union Street.

I asked Lance, was the basics for the book to look at what society can do with criminals who are anti-social? He said: "All the aggression out there is frustrating. You could be minding your own business one minute and the next, someone else's problems are in your face." He continued: "I initially sat down and wrote a series of stories that intrigued me and put it together as one story - then I embellished it with characters and love scenes."

If you know Aberdeen, it's great to be able to visualise the mentioned locations such as North Anderson Drive, Northfield, Tillydrone and the numerous bridges sprawling across the River Dee. However, you won't be able to help yourself from trying to establish if the characters describe any of the great, the good and the bad in the city.

Lance assured me, however, that none of them is based on real people, though he admits there are some characteristics of

certain people he has met. He said: "The detective's wife, for example, is probably a composite of women I have known. I suppose you could say that my ideal woman and family are described in the book!" Having read the book, however, I personally think the female character would be every man's ideal woman!

Lance started writing Direct Action in summer 2006 and he's now writing the sequel 'Terror', which has the same characters and some new ones. It's also based in Aberdeen but covers the whole of Scotland.

Lance said: "When you've written a book, the last thing you want to do is write another book, but as a commercial author you have to do at least two or three. It was a huge slog to begin the sequel. When you are writing a book you are so consumed by it, you can't sleep as the ideas are all in your head. "He says it's been "eye-opening" meeting people who have read the book and everyone, so far, has said it was great. His personal review of the book: "I don't think it's great. I think it's OK for a first attempt."

In my view, I couldn't put it down, it was local but not parochial and it had all the suspense required for a great thriller, with an unexpected twist at the end. I'm looking forward to reading the sequel!