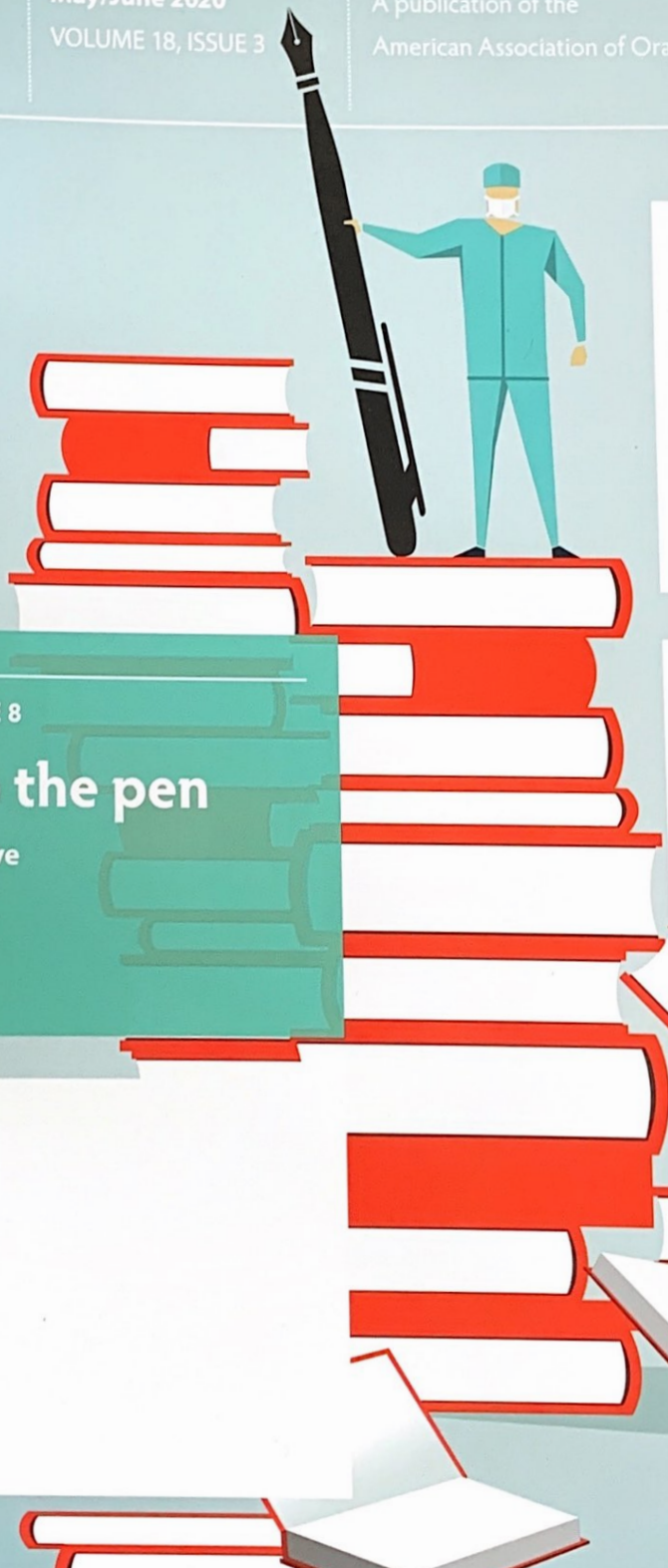


AAOMS TODAY



May/June 2020
VOLUME 18, ISSUE 3

A publication of the
American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons



President: Dedication, adaptability during the pandemic

Everything changed with the spread of COVID-19

page 6

COVER STORY | PAGE 8

Picking up the pen

AAOMS members give book writing a try

20 questions: All the need-to-know answers about the 2020 Annual Meeting

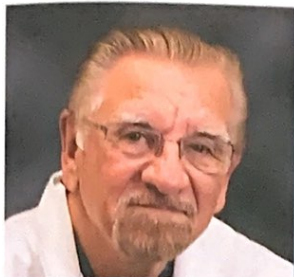
Highlights include clinical tracks, hands-on courses, new forum

page 22

SCORE for OMS to enhance resident education

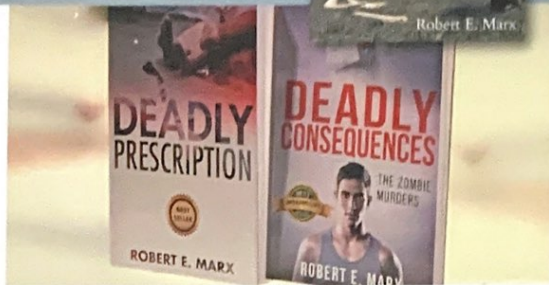
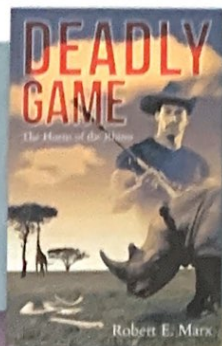
Learning management system set to be released in July

page 43



Robert E. Marx, DDS
Life Fellow

Author of mystery trilogy: *Deadly Prescription*;
Deadly Consequences: The Zombie Murders;
Deadly Game: The Horns of the Rhino



Dr. Marx is Professor of Surgery and Chief of the Division of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine and Chief of Surgery at Jackson South Medical Center in Miami. Regarded as an expert in pathology and reconstructive surgery, he won the 1995 William J. Gies Foundation Award, 1995 Donald B. Osbon Award for an Outstanding Educator, 2006 OMS Foundation Daniel M. Laskin Award for outstanding article in *JOMS* and 1989 Research Recognition Award from the OMS Foundation.

His textbooks include *Oral and Maxillofacial Pathology: A Rationale for Diagnosis and Treatment*; *Platelet Rich Plasma: Dental and Craniofacial Applications*; *Tissue Engineering*; *Oral and Intravenous Bisphosphonates Induced Osteonecrosis* and *Atlas of Bone Harvesting*.

Dr. Marx also writes medical mystery fiction novels. Published in 2016 by Prominent Books, LLC, the first was *Deadly Prescription*. *Deadly Consequences: The Zombie Murders* followed in 2018. The final installment in his trilogy – *Deadly Game: The Horns of the Rhino* – was published in November. All three books have been bestsellers on Amazon.com.

Q What inspired your latest book?

A That inspiration came from my many trips to South Africa, Botswana and those places on photographic safaris where you learn about the poaching of elephants and rhinos. I was really astounded to find out the technology of rhino poaching has gone on to machine guns and helicopters. The poachers are so clever these days; they're adding Viagra to the rhino horn powder. The powder of rhinoceros horn is thought to be an aphrodisiac in the Chinese and Southeast Asian cultures, so adding Viagra gives it a source of credibility. That pushed the demand sky high and now the white rhino, which is the last of the real larger populations of rhino, is being more severely threatened.

Each year, it becomes more of an obvious effort. You talk to the trackers and game drivers, who are very knowledgeable and very dedicated to stopping this, and they just lament.

They're being outgunned, outmanned, and there's big money people behind this, and that's what I tried to bring out in *Deadly Game: The Horns of the Rhino*. It's not just the poor African native who is trying to make a living. It's people of more sinister values and ideas behind it.

Q The other books in the trilogy are fairly different. What inspired each?

A As most of my colleagues in oral and maxillofacial surgery know, I was the expert witness against some of the big drug companies in the bisphosphonate scandal, a group of drugs used for osteoporosis and in patients with some cancers that produced dead bone in the jaws. On the witness stand, I learned of all the poor research and corruption and hiding of bad results the companies did to bring their product to market, and they would be making \$3.5 billion a year on basically falsified and incomplete research. It astounded me. I was naive at first.

Deadly Prescription is a takeoff on that, trying to educate the reader about what is going on behind the scenes of major drug companies and some of the medical issues today. It also gave me a chance to educate the reader about other medical conditions like rabies and mad cow disease.

In *Deadly Consequences*, the bad guys are usually the big drug companies who have this network. The anesthesiologist I portrayed basically sold out his integrity for money and his ego to win the Nobel Prize. He took a lot of money from big drug companies who were going to parlay that into a bigger profit margin for themselves.

continued on next page

Q How enjoyable has this writing been?

A It's been great. I almost wish I had more time to do it. I'm still an active surgeon. One of the protagonists is an OMS who figures out some of the skullduggery going on, and it shows an OMS is more than just a person who removes teeth.

Q What got you into fiction writing?

A It happened one day when I was doing research with a colleague who's an oral and maxillofacial pathologist, Dr. Robert Greer. He had written 15 or 16 novels. He gave me some pointers, but since I am in Miami, and he's in Colorado, he couldn't coach me. I hired a writing service that did that, and it's been great.

We've lectured every year at the Denver Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Board Review Course. When I got to the bisphosphonate issue, he thought that would be a great idea for a fictional novel.

He said, 'Do what I do, write novels. You'll get to more people that way, and you'll have a greater interest level.' I thought about it for about two months. I wrote 60 pages, which he presented to his literary agent just to see whether I should give up my day job. The literary agent said, 'You have something here that sounds like a good story, and your writing ability is good, but you need to polish it.' So, I had to polish it.

Q How did you do that?

A What I did was make the hardest transition I've made in a long time from medical writing. I've published over 12 textbooks and at least 20 chapters in other books where it's scientific writing and everything is short and to the point, whereas fictional writing, you have to create an image in the reader's mind of the smells, the sounds, the colors. Through a writing coach, I've learned to write fictional novels and incorporate that imagery.

Q Has writing gotten easier now that you've finished your third book?

A Yes, it has. I learned with the first book, but you polish it off. Every book is a little bit better. That's why I'm enthused about the next book. My writing coach says it's the best of my work. I like to think he's right.

My upcoming novel is really more of an epic; it's called *Replague* – and I actually wrote this before the COVID-19 pandemic. It's about an ancient plague beginning with the Neanderthals 25,000 years ago that gets exposed to modern man, and we have no resistance to it.

After the trilogy, I'm branching out into separate topics, one called the *Stem Cells from Hell* because that's my research. The other one is *The Painkiller*. These are all medical topics that are topical to the layman today; stem cells are a big issue and concern. There's a lot of misinformation about them.

I've published over 12 textbooks and at least 20 chapters in other books where it's scientific writing and everything is short and to the point, whereas fictional writing, you have to create an image in the reader's mind of the smells, the sounds, the colors.

– Dr. Robert E. Marx

Q You'll keep going as you come up with topics?

A I plan to. Those are ones I've jotted down the basic storyline and, when I get a chance, write it and weave it into an interesting group of characters. What I have learned is you have to develop an interesting character. The character in *Deadly Game*, everybody loves; Big Jim McCullar is an Australian who is like a nasty 007. Everything he does is right, and he interfaces with the poachers.

These are takeoffs from my own experiences. In *Deadly Game*, the scene I think my colleagues would like the most comes during the safari. Dr. Merriweather, the OMS on a photographic safari, comes across two poachers eaten by lions and a third one who's been terribly mauled. Dr. Merriweather organizes how you manage somebody who is near death and undergoes emergency medical care in the field and back at the camp.

Every OMS will identify with that. We all deal with trauma in the emergency room. I specifically wrote that scene to engage my colleagues.

I wanted the average reader to understand who an OMS is and bring them into the conscience of the American public. We're always this duality of partial dentistry, partial medicine. Having an OMS as the protagonist in some novels educates them to what our profession is all about, one that I'm really proud of.

I write in between surgeries when I'm on airplanes and on weekends, and I have to balance this between my medical books because I'm writing a couple more.