



## Q & A Tip Sheet

### What is the main inspiration behind *The Golden Ellipse* and the *Powers That Be* Trilogy?

The worlds I created when developing my *Lost Cactus* comic strip stretched beyond 3-panels from the start. To enhance the reader experience for my self-published anthologies, I wrote shared universe short stories and essays delving deeper into the sci-fi, paranormal, and clandestine themes. One short story, *The Stowaway*, introduced the main characters, Owen and Rachel Haig, a newlywed couple who kick off their honeymoon on a space tourism flight in 2044. That is the beginning of *The Golden Ellipse*, and it has blossomed into a massive universe of characters and stories from that point forward.

### Who are your most influential authors and books?

Michael Crichton's *Jurassic Park* is the original inspiration behind my *Lost Cactus* comic strip, laying the groundwork for my novels. The ensemble cast and written dialogue passages in *The Expanse* series by James S.A. Corey stand out. James Rollins' historical prologues is a literary technique I also use to set the stage in my books. The historical fiction by Bernard Cornwell is extremely well researched and fantastic. For the macabre and paranormal, *The Pendragast* novels written by Douglas Preston and Lincoln Child are a huge influence on my style and prose. I have not read as much Stephen King, but his novel *Tommyknockers* was haunting. Stephen Coonts' character-driven political intrigue. I also read and admire the visionary futurists: Verne, Asimov, Clarke, and Burroughs.

### What is *The Powers That Be*?

The name says it all—a nebulous extra-governmental organization in a centuries-old alliance with extraterrestrial allies, meting out paradigm-shifting tech at a slow, deliberate pace—move too fast and things go sideways, i.e. atomic energy. The clandestine organization works for the betterment of humanity with an ultimate goal to shepherd us to an Omega Point. A major theme explored in the series is the confluence of human and robot evolutions into something new, strange, and perhaps unrecognizable.

### What influences led you to become a science fiction writer?

I have always had an interest in aliens and UFOs. I am also a natural-born cynic, so the spoon-fed 24/7 news cycle leaves me with more questions than answers. To quote a semi-famous line, "The truth is out there."

### Why self-publish?

Early in my creative endeavors, I submitted my comic strip to the major syndicates. One had great interest, very exciting, but with one major caveat: lose the alien character. That was a non-starter for me, so I took my comics into the nascent world of self-publishing starting back in 2015. That led to the anthologies which begat the short stories and so on. Since then, the publishing industry has come a long way, and self-publishing has made many in-roads. Having said that, nobody would turn down a lucrative book deal with a reputable publishing house. I know I sure wouldn't.

### What is your process when writing a novel?

Whether painting a portrait or writing a novel, there are dozens of paths to the same result. When planning a painting, I like to start with thumbnails, color studies, and underdrawings to nail the composition before embarking on a finished piece. My writing process is the same, starting with timelines, character bios, storyboards, and outlines, blocking in the major plot elements, then honing in and fleshing out the details, correcting mistakes, continuity issues, editing the heck out of it. It is frightening how easy it is to overlook the most basic mistakes. With the trilogy blocked in from start to end throughout all three novels, all I require is time to see them through to completion.

### Do you have literary representation?

No. I would entertain working with an agent with experience in the sci-fi genre.