

Mystery

## THRILLERFEST 2012: CHATTING WITH LEE CHILD

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The one name on the lips of most attendees at ThrillerFest was that of Jack Reacher, the beloved noble loner of **Lee Child's** creation. The series, which is soon to see its 17th installment, is also on track to premiere its first movie adaptation, entitled *Jack Reacher*, this December. During a packed event at ThrillerFest spotlighting Lee Child, the British author was on hand to talk about the compelling character he's created and the most recent controversy concerning the casting of Tom Cruise as everyone's favorite antihero.

### On Creating the Character

According to Child, Jack Reacher is reminiscent of the classic Western hero. Child started writing about the big, brawny American — who clocks in at 6'5" and 250 pounds — after a corporate restructuring in 1995 forced him from his career in British television. Focusing on a character who wandered the wide open spaces of America helped to get Child "out of Britain mentally." Reacher is the character who comes to the rescue just in the nick of time, and then rides off into the sunset.

### On the Impact of Jack Reacher

"I've met at least a dozen dogs named Jack Reacher," said Child. He's also been presented with birth certificates from proud fans/fathers who named their newborn sons after the legendary character. When asked if he modeled Reacher after himself, Child joked that he was Jack Reacher, but that he had to "turn the violence down to keep it plausible." But on a more serious note, he went on to explain that character creation is almost like wish fulfillment. Through Jack, Child lives out his dreams.

### A packed audience of fellow authors and enthusiastic fans

### On Turning the Book into a Movie

Child acknowledges the current popular culture trend that denies a book is valid until it's graced the big screen, but he rejects that idea. "A book," he explains, "is the end result." All the rest, to Child, is extraneous. That said, a movie about Reacher had been in the works since March 1997. The author stated that he's not involved in the adaptation of book to film, calling it a "brutal thing" to have to cut down his own work. Of the whole, only about 10% of the book, *One Shot*, would make it into the movie.



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### On the Movie Itself

Although he has only seen the film in fragments, Child is thrilled with the result. “As a movie,” he states, “it is really, really good.” Eagle-eyed fans may even be able to spot the writer. He plays a deputy who hands Reacher the only personal item he’d had in his possession after being booked: A toothbrush.

### On the Controversy Over Casting Tom Cruise

There was no way Lee Child was going to get away from addressing the **brouhaha that has erupted** over the casting of Tom Cruise as Jack Reacher. In fact, Kathleen Antrim, his interviewer during the ThrillerFest spotlight, opened their talk with just two words: “Tom. Cruise.” Child said that he was “thrilled and grateful that anybody has an opinion at all [on the casting].” To him, this just signifies how well loved the character truly is. While he acknowledged that Cruise doesn’t measure up physically to the description of Reacher, he said that it was an impossible standard for anyone to meet. “People,” he said, “are acting as if we marched past legions of 6’5” and 250 pound actors.” Cruise may not have the look, but he does have the feel of the character. And that, to Child, is the most crucial part.

To get a glimpse of the movie and Tom Cruise as Reacher, take a peek at the trailer [here](#). You can also catch up on the latest Jack Reacher thriller, *A Wanted Man*, when it hits the shelves this September.

**Check back all week for more ThrillerFest 2012 coverage. And for more genre news, visit our [Everything Mystery/Thriller/Suspense Page](#).**

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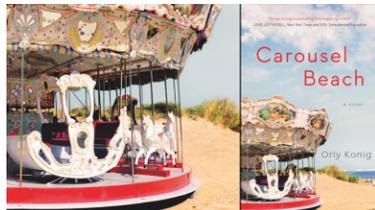
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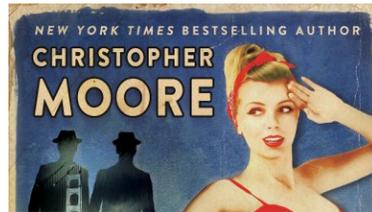
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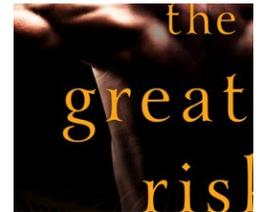
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