



Interesting Tidbits

Paul has bought his mom every John Grisham novel that he has ever written.

John Grisham is a best-selling author that has written over 20 books, with 8 of his books being adapted into movies (The Firm, The Pelican Brief, A Time to Kill, and The Client to name a few). Lukas Reiter has been the producer of several hit shows such as "Law & Order," "Boston Legal," and "The Practice." "The Firm" was released as a novel in 1991 and it was turned into a movie in 1993. However, on Sunday, January 8th from 9-11pm on NBC, "The Firm" will be airing their 2 hour season premiere before moving to their usual time slot on Thursdays at 10pm beginning January 12th. John and Lukas are working together as executive producers for the new show and they are taking you 10 years after the end of the novel to see where Mitch (Josh Lucas) and Abby (Molly Parker) McDeere are now. Shakefire had a chance to interview John and Lukas about the show.

SHAKEFIRE: Good afternoon guys! I'm very happy for being given the chance to talk to you both about your new upcoming show, "The Firm."

JOHN GRISHAM: Good afternoon to you too and thank you!

LUKAS REITER: Hi and thanks!

SF: I wanted to start off by saying, John, my mom is a huge fan of yours. She has read all of your books and seen all the movies. She doesn't know it yet, but she has a hardcover copy of "The Litigators" gift-wrapped under the Christmas tree. She is going to be very jealous when she finds out I got to talk to you.

JG: She sounds like a very intelligent woman. I like her already! I really hope she enjoys the show and loves the book.

SF: After "The Client" was turned into a tv series, was there anything about that show that gave you thoughts about making "The Firm" into a tv series?

JG: The TV series for "The Client" actually gave me some great hesitation because it was such a dreadful and painful experience that I didn't want to do anything like it for a while. I forgot about television for a while. I never forgot about film, but movies have become very difficult to make for a bunch of different reasons. I didn't even think about making The Firm a tv show until Luke Reiter showed up with a script. I read it 3 years ago and thought it was very good. I was very excited about the idea of making it a weekly drama.

SF: John, What has been your on-going involvement with the TV series?

JG: My involvement is to work with Lukas and pass on big ideas about where the series might go. I read some of the scripts, but I don't like reading scripts in general. I just want to be able to watch it and be as surprised and engaged in the show as the viewers at home. However, after reading some of the episodes, I know the series is in really good hands.

LR: I think John is being a bit modest. The macro picture of the show and how we are approaching it has really benefitted from working with and talking with John. The central conspiracy was a collaboration between John and myself. We are working very hard in the writing room to make everything work.

SF: Where would you want to be able to take Mitch that you weren't able to in the book or movie, but might be able to do so on the TV series?

JG: In the book, Mitch was always on the run because he ticked off some pretty nasty people. The movie was a bit different because it had a different ending. I've never wanted to think about making sequels or going back to old characters. Knock on wood, I have never suffered from writer's block, but if it ever does happen, I might need to resurrect some of these old characters and write some sequels. As a creator, in terms of Mitch & Abby, I was done with them. The cool thing about the tv show was you get to see Mitch as a lawyer with different cases each week. That's where Mitch is going to be fleshed out as a real character when he deals with his clients. You always know that there's some bad guys out there and they are coming after Mitch. The suspense is always there.



SF: What we can expect from the 2 hour premiere?

JG: It is very well done and very entertaining. It is going to have lots of suspense and I love it. That's what I want to watch and all I think about. I am always trying to create a story that will want to keep readers up all night turning pages and skipping work and skipping meals. That's what I strive to do when I have a suspenseful story. The pilot is built the same way. There's a lot of action, but there's also a lot of good drama where the characters stop and reflect. They are real people. The show has a great cast. Josh Lucas is terrific! He has all the makings and mannerisms and charisma of a good star. Its been a lot of fun seeing someone else's vision of these characters 10 years since we last seen them. There is also lots of legal intrigue, courtroom stuff, lawyer-client problems, law firm intrigue and all the other lawyer stuff I enjoy writing about.

LR: We are picking things up 10 years later. The show really is the next chapter of the novel and film. I started out a huge fan of the original material and we tried to carry on the spirit of that story telling and continue to tell what ever happened to Mitch and Abby McDeere. We are trying to create a legal thriller each week with all the action, suspense, and adrenaline rush from John Grisham's novels and put it into the stories we are telling each episode.

SF: I had the chance to talk to Molly Parker (Abby McDeere) a couple months ago and she was really excited be a part of the show. What was it about Molly Parker that made her ideal for the role of Abby?

JG: You are asking wrong person. I learned a long time ago that when it comes to casting, it is best to leave it to the professionals. I am horrible at it and think it is truly an art in itself. I think Lukas can better answer this for you.

LR: It is an art in itself. What everyone on the creative team really responded to about Molly Parker was that she has such a certain soulfulness and talent as an actress that really comes through in everything she does. At the heart of this story, it has always been about the relationship between Mitch and Abbey in many ways. They are partners and the way they talk, listen, and interact with each other really requires a certain kind of actress to convey that kind of a woman. We all felt Molly was the right person for the job.

SF: Tom Cruise played Mitch in the movie adaption of "The Firm. Did you ever think of having Tom Cruise play Mitch for the TV series instead of Josh Lucas?

LR: I don't think that was ever raised as possibility. Even though I love Tom Cruise's work, I'm not sure that was a part of our thinking here. While the show is about Mitch McDeere, everything happens 10 years later and we needed a different characterization. We find Mitch in a different time in his life after going through 10 years of being in the witness protection program. This isn't about Josh Lucas playing the character Tom Cruise played in the movie. Its more about Mitch being in a different part of his life. Josh really owned his character and created this new version of Mitch and where he would be at this point of his life. He did a great job at it and made it look so natural for him.

SF: Wow! The show sounds really great and I can't wait to check out the season premiere with my mom. Thank you guys for the interview and I hope you have a happy holiday!!

LR: Thanks and you too.

JG: Thank you too and I hope you both enjoy it

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