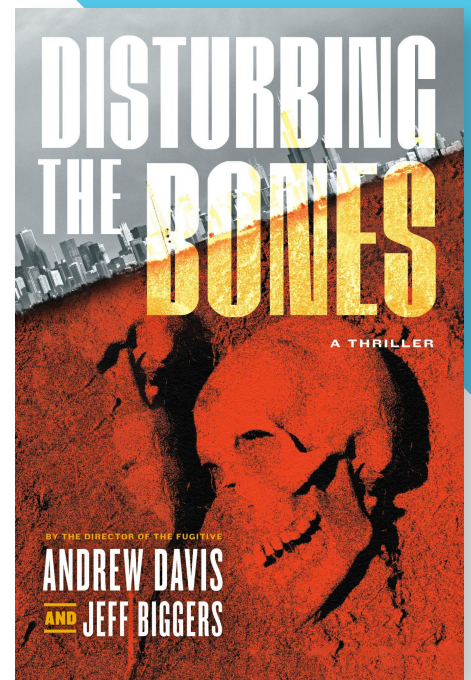


DISTURBING THE BONES

Andrew Davis and Jeff Biggers

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“ (A) thrillingly cinematic collaboration between *The Fugitive* director Davis and journalist Biggers... Intense, vivid action...By the time the breathless denouement rolls around, readers may find they’ve been up all night.”

— *Publishers Weekly*, **STARRED** Review

“ An exceptionally edge-of-your-seat murder mystery connected to modern day Cold War global politics. With echoes of current domestic political intrigue, the tale hooks the reader from the beginning and never lets up until the very end.”

— **Ron Stallworth**, *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Black Klansman*

INTRODUCTION

A plot to disrupt a global peace summit in Chicago collides with a civil rights case breakthrough at a mysterious archaeological site . . .

Chicago detective Randall Jenkins has not been back home to the historic Civil Rights hotspot of Cairo, Illinois since the disappearance of his mother, a well-known journalist, several decades ago.

That all changes the day Dr. Molly Moore, an ambitious young archaeologist in the national spotlight for her groundbreaking high-tech discoveries, uncovers a set of strange bones at a huge 12,000-year-old site at a highway construction project. With retired military general and contractor William Alexander breathing down her neck to cover up the dig, Molly and Randall soon find themselves in the middle of a wild military conspiracy.

The detective and archaeologist’s entwined family mysteries suddenly thrust them into the central position as the only people who can ensure the safety of the ongoing Chicago global peace summit. They must take on the rogue general who views any disarmament agreement as a clear and present danger to the United States. The fate of global peace and the lives of Molly and Randall hang in the balance.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Disturbing the Bones* opens with the discovery of human remains at an archaeological site. How does this discovery frame the rest of the novel? Many physical excavations occur throughout the novel, but where else do we see this process of “excavation” take place?
2. What is the effect of the third-person omniscient narrator? Why not tell the story solely from Randall’s or Molly’s perspective?
3. What is law enforcement’s role in *Disturbing the Bones*? What separates Randall from police officers like Sheriff Benton?



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4. Setting plays an important role in *Disturbing the Bones*, with the majority of events taking place in either Cairo or Chicago. Why focus specifically on these two cities? What does each city represent for Randall? What does each city represent politically?
5. In *Disturbing the Bones*, there are many cultural and political differences between Cairo and Chicago, do these differences reflect a larger phenomenon in the United States, and if so, how? Consider the Waller-Adam election and its parallels to the ongoing presidential election.
6. Consider the way Gen. Alexander presents his newly advanced drone weaponry, what does this display reveal about the nature of political violence? What does it reveal about the general attitude towards war within the novel?
7. Both Molly and Randall possess ties to Cairo's political history; Molly's grandfather having been a prominent white supremacist and Randall's mother a civil rights activist. How have these family legacies shaped Molly and Randall? Do these histories inform their decisions throughout the novel?
8. Guilt is a central theme throughout *Disturbing the Bones*. What is each character's relationship to guilt and how does it influence their actions and relationships to others?
9. In what way is the "past prologue"? Is it necessary to dig up the past in order to ensure a better future?
10. What is the role of social-media and national news throughout the novel? Are these platforms tools that help or hinder the pursuit of the truth?
11. Were you satisfied by the conclusion of *Disturbing the Bones*? Would Randall and Molly have been better off if they hadn't pursued the truth?
12. Written by an acclaimed director and journalist team, does it feel like film influenced the writing style or plotlines? Which scenes feel especially cinematic?



ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jeff Biggers, is the American Book Award-winning author of many works of investigative journalism, history and theatre, including *Reckoning at Eagle Creek*, winner of the Delta Prize for Literature and the Broder Award for Environmental Reporting, and the recent *In Sardinia*. His work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Guardian*, and on NPR.

Andrew Davis, raised on the southside of Chicago, is the acclaimed director and screenwriter of numerous films, including *Holes*, *Under Siege*, *Code of Silence*, *A Perfect Murder*, and *The Guardian*, and whose landmark film, *The Fugitive*, chosen in 2020 by *Los Angeles Times* readers as the ultimate summer film, was nominated for seven Academy awards including Best Picture.

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