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## Author Spotlight 64: Jeff Rasley

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## Author Spotlight 64: Jeff Rasley

by Jeff Rasley

I started writing bad poetry as a teenager and graduated to short stories and feature articles in college. I honed my craft at feature article writing as much as time permitted through graduate schools, practicing law, domestic husbandry and raising two sons. My loves other than wife, kids and writing have been sports and what has been called adventure travel.

After one semester I dropped out of college and hitch-hiked across the country. I spent the next summer traveling around Europe by any means necessary. The following summer I motorcycled from Northern Indiana to Mexico City. Career, marriage and kids slowed me down somewhat, but I have set foot in over 40 countries. I've climbed several Himalayan peaks and have been leading Himalayan trekking and mountaineering expeditions for a decade. I managed to survive an avalanche and getting lost at sea in a solo kayak in the Palau Islands.

Eventually travel for the sake of adventure and personal curiosity was insufficiently meaningful. I began to "philanthro-trek" – combining travel with philanthropy in the new millennium. A special relationship developed with a remote Himalayan village. Two friends and I were only the third group of "white people" to visit the village. Leaders of the village and I established the Basa Village Project, which has grown into a Nepal-based NGO and a U.S. nonprofit corporation to benefit Basa and other Himalayan villages.

Three of the books I have written tell the story of how I came to have a special relationship with the Rai people and the wisdom I have gained from them about environmentalism, spirituality and community. I have tried to give a truthful account of the 3 Cups of Tea received from my friends in the Nepal Himalayas.

A fourth book, *Islands in My Dreams* is an anthology of personal essays about unique island cultures I have experienced in my travels. For example, Tonga has the fattest kings and the longest ruling family dynasty of current monarchs. Palau is the most litigious society on earth with three lawsuits for every citizen. Islands are where dreams and nightmares come true.

*False Prophet?* is my first attempt at fiction, although it is inspired by a case I handled twenty years ago. It is an inspirational mystery, romantic suspense and political / legal thriller; a story of love lost and found and a rant against the inequities of the legal system. The story is gritty but uplifting. It reveals the seamy underside of local politics in Indianapolis. But it also shows how white folks and African-Americans can work together for justice. The love story is one of frustration and self-destruction, but ultimately understanding, reconciliation, renewed intimacy and a baby.