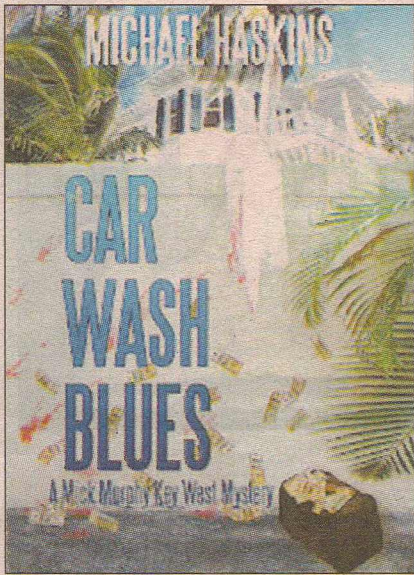


solares hill

on the bookshelf

Haskins' 'Car Wash Blues' Washes Into

Bookstores

**'Car Wash Blues' by Michael Haskins (Five Star, \$25.95)**

A former newspaperman, Michael Haskins learned to bang out stories on a manual typewriter. But these days he uses a computer to write his Mad Mick Murphy mysteries. And he's become a whiz at marketing them online.

Haskins has his own webpage. And his books can be purchased on Amazon.

He does a lot of the marketing himself, whether its live book signings, readings or special-price sales on the Internet.

His latest, "Car Wash Blues," has just been released in hardback. Library Journal says: "The latest Mick Murphy thriller delivers abundant action, car chases, boat chases and an alphabet soup of weapons. Toss in some subterfuge and a brewing hurricane and you've got the perfect beach read."

"Sounds pretty good," Haskins grins at me, looking like a leprechaun who knows where the pot of gold is hidden. "I like to read books like that myself."

Boston Irish, Haskins began his journalism career with the Record-American, a Hearst Newspaper. After a side trip to the West Coast to work for ABC (yes, he helped produce the Oscars telecasts), Haskins moved to Key West.

After covering the business beat for the Key West Citizen and serving as public information officer for the City of Key West, Haskins settled down to PR work and stringing for Reuters, giving him time to write his popular mystery series.

His main character — a Boston Irish journalist named Liam "Mick" Murphy — is very much like Haskins himself except for sporting a red beard. Murphy resides in Key West, where he encounters fictional crimes ranging from murder to drug cartels.

"Car Wash Blues," as the title hints, begins at a car wash. Hard men with Uzi 9mm pistols let loose a barrage of bullets into the windshield of an SUV that's soaping up in front of Murphy's car. Not exactly an event he can ignore. As Murphy tells us, "This was the beginning of my nightmare."

The shooting sets in motion a chain of events that racks up more dead bodies plus the appearance of Murphy's friend Norm, a fix-it guy for an undisclosed government agency who often bails the freelance journalist out of hot water. Like when tangling with drug lords.

An action-packed adventure in an island paradise with Mick Murphy to challenge the bad guys and Norm Burke to clean up the mess — that's always a winning premise for Michael Haskins.

For my money, Haskins' writing and storytelling keep getting better book after book ... or maybe I'm just getting hooked on Mad Mick Murphy tales.

— *Reviewed by Shirrel Rhoades*