Broward lawyer's political thriller about presidential scandal has local links

South Florida lawyer and author Robert Buschel (Handout/Post Hill Press/David Decoteau)

By **Paula McMahon** · **Contact Reporter**

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Well-known lawyer Robert Buschel has played a role in some of South Florida's most notorious real-life legal cases but his first work of fiction is a political thriller with plenty of Broward references and a timely link to presidential campaigns and scandals.

Buschel, who grew up in Hollywood and cut his lawyering teeth at the Broward Public Defender's Office before going into private practice, pulled off the feat of securing a book deal with a publisher for his first book.

"By Silent Majority" goes on sale Tuesday in Barnes & Noble stores and is available on Amazon.com.

The novel's central character, Daniel Carlson, is the most popular president in history but he has a very big secret — one that's big enough to bring down his whole administration on the eve of his expected re-election.

Buschel said he's been pleased that early readers of the book were genuinely surprised by the plot twist.

Buschel said he wouldn't run for political office, "not even at gunpoint," but is a political junkie who volunteered on local campaigns and worked for several local politicians. The idea for his novel started germinating when he was in law school and it took him years to write and modernize the idea.

"I wanted to create a president who ran and succeeded for all the right reasons yet there's scandal all around him and, ultimately, one of those scandals is going to stick," Buschel said.

Some of the physical and political terrain will be familiar to South Florida readers, including references to those notorious dangling chads from controversial presidential ballot counts — and re-counts — of the past.

Readers will visit some Broward County locales and encounter some characters with evocative names, including a U.S. Attorney Giulianti and a negative campaign consultant, known as "the smut peddler," named Roger Rock.

Buschel has been friends with ex-Hollywood Mayor Mara Giulianti's son for most of his life and occasionally represented political operative Roger Stone.

Buschel, 47, lives in Fort Lauderdale where his law practice is based. He graduated from Hollywood Hills High School, the University of Miami and Nova Southeastern University's law school.

Some of his most prominent trials included representing Kathy Bush, the former Coral Springs resident who was convicted of child abuse in the notorious Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy trial, and Joseph McGowan, who was cleared of leaving the scene of an accident on I-595 that killed a female pedestrian. He also represents a lot of local police officers.

Fans of the popular Serial podcast will recognize the name of one of his recent clients, Asia McClain, who became a key alibi witness in the Baltimore murder case of Adnan Syed. McClain wrote her own book and acknowledged Buschel for his help in vetting her transcript.

When Buschel isn't working, he volunteers his skills as a pilot and the use of his plane to fly compassion missions for medically needy patients.

How did he find time to write a successful novel? "I watched less television. I don't go to sports games, I don't boat and I don't golf."

Buschel is already working on his next novel, which focuses on another South Florida theme: Ponzi schemes.

Though Buschel worked at convicted Ponzi schemer Scott Rothstein's Rothstein Rosenfeldt Adler law firm for some years, he was never accused of any misconduct and was identified in sworn testimony as one of only three lawyers at the firm who billed enough legitimate business to more than cover their costs.

Buschel said his next book includes a character named Scott Rothstein but is not about Rothstein's Ponzi scheme. "It's not a fictional recreation of it because that would be boring. I write to live, I don't write to re-live," he joked.

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