

Interviewers' FAQ: Author Bea Giovanni

Q: What is your writing style?

A: It really all depends on what genre. For example, my writing background is primarily in the academic setting. As a scholar and lecturer, I have performed extensive research in a variety of areas. So, my writing style in academia would be a scholarly one and tone. However, because I recently started writing outside the academic setting, my writing style is evolving and I like it.

In the academic setting, you have so many writing conventions and limitations that it is almost monotonous and plain, since everyone uses similar styles. But, in non-academic writing settings, I am able to explore other styles and go beyond the traditional writing conventions and push the limit in my writing. So, I guess you can say I try not to pin myself into one category or style.

Q: What is a typical day for Bea Giovanni?

A: My day always varies. It is never the same and this is by intentional. I like regularity and predictability but sometimes I don't, with strong emphasis on the latter. On a regular day, my day starts with waking everyone up in my household so they can start their day. I am usually the first one to awake.

My family jokes that I am a drill sergeant, because I wake up so early. But, they like that I wake up early. Let's just say that when I do not wake up early, the entire household is wondering what's wrong and why I did not wake anyone up and have their things ready to go. Even our dogs have a routine; our two rescue dogs worry if I am not up by a certain time. So, our dogs lick me to get me up if I am 'not on my game.'

Actually, my day is one of convenience because I work from home, so it is easier for me to coordinate and help everyone in the home. Hence, this is why everyone depends on me to wake them up and make breakfast and so on. For example, if anything is needed throughout the day, such as someone forgetting something at home, I can easily drop it off. And, this happens a lot.

Anyway, once I awake, it is usually me and our two rescue dogs. They love their morning air. So, I take them outside and let them roam. Then, I proceed to feed the dogs. Afterwards, I am making breakfast for everyone, since everyone in the house are going into three different directions and have different schedules. Then, I also make lunch for my significant other to take to work.

During all of this coordination, we manage to spend time with each other, joking, laughing, talking and connecting, wishing each other the best in their day. We are a tightknit group, who cares deeply for each other and are there for one another whenever practical and possible,

since we are all busy trying to achieve goals. After everyone is off in their directions and starting their day, I can finally settle down and focus on my day. This, as I mentioned earlier, can vary.

I get dinner ready early by prepping for dinner, which may consist of either soaking beans early in the day, chopping veggies, or making a grocery list of items needed for the meal to get later in the day. On a regular basis, my family and I alternate on cooking dinner. Depending on what the house wants for dinner, it could be as easy as making the meal in the crockpot, later coming home to a delicious smelling home and food ready to eat.

Finally focusing on my day, I check in with my job and perform my work tasks, write, answer emails, and get ready to exercise. Lately, I have been very active. During the day, while everyone is away, I take lots of fitness classes including weight training, cardio, and Pilates.

I think I may exercise 5 days throughout the week, leaving my weekends free for connecting with my family and friends. My fitness routine gives me a great outlet to 'do me.' By that time everyone comes home, I have finished my day and work, and I have the evening time with my family and any other events or activities we plan.

We have weekly family nights, where we relax and spend time together and sometimes we invite friends to join us in family night. This could be watching movies and ordering take-out, going to the movies, self-care, dancing, going out for dinner, creating something together, going to a concert, playing games, catching up with one another and spending time with friends.

Q: When did you first start writing? Also, what was the first thing you wrote?

A: It depends on what you consider writing. I remember in elementary school, I first started writing raps or rhymes. I had a clear yellow folder with sheets of raps. I never used my raps. I thought they were not good enough. It was just something I did when I had free time. I use to hide the raps under my dresser because I did not want anyone to know I wrote raps or to tease me about them.

Years later in college and while my sister, who was in high school, was rearranging things around the house, found my raps under the dresser, hidden away. Her and her friends thought they were good, so they used them to call into a radio show to win prizes. The best rap would get tickets to a concert, money, t-shirts, trips, and whatever the radio station gave away. She did not tell me until I noticed the yellow, clear folder on the shelf.

Another instance of my early writing was when I was 14 years old. My junior high English teacher encouraged me to enter a poem into a poetry journal contest. So, I wrote a poem on the environment, though I was hesitant and somewhat critical of myself since I thought it was not good enough. But, apparently, someone saw otherwise because it was published in an international poetry journal.

Then, about a year later, another one of my English teachers encouraged the class to write an editorial piece and then try to get it published in the local newspaper. It was extra credit, even

if you did not get it published. I am not sure who submitted an article. But, I took the challenge since I figured no one would publish my article anyway, but at least I could get extra credit by showing I wrote the article and submitted it to the editor of the local newspaper.

Well, to my surprise, my article was the only one accepted from our class into the editorial piece. I believed I wrote it on wasteful government spending, which I thought no one wanted to hear, better yet read. But apparently, it was a good topic to write about at the time.

The teacher, my school and my family were very proud of me. Not many people, especially children, got their opinions published in the local newspaper (at least not at that time).

Q: Can fans expect another fictional novel?

A: Definitely. Writing is an art and I love the arts. Even though this is currently a hobby, I love writing. I do not know what the next novel will be, since I wait until inspiration hits me. I never like forcing a situation. Art is too delicate and carries a bigger, overarching message for everyone.

For myself, writing has served as a vehicle to express myself and to also explore other art forms. I would love to explore writing screenplays, television and movie scripts, and even venturing into the entertainment and media industry.

I am big fan of the entertainment industry and I love virtually everyone Shonda Rhimes' television series. She is definitely a trailblazer. Knowing that women are underrepresented in many industries, especially the entertainment and media industry, in key and meaningful decision-making roles, fuels my desire to also help break those barriers.

Q: What is your dream job?

A: I love this question because I never have the same answer. I am not a person who likes to be 'boxed' into a certain career or path. I have taken several psychological assessments and tests and one of them suggested that I was an INFJ personality type.

This actually explained why I disliked being in just one category or being boxed into one career path. I think I may have been in several career fields similar to an INFJ personality type, and this was long before I knew I was an INFJ personality type.

In an ideal world, my dream job would be fun where I would make lots of money. Let's get real, not all jobs that are fun pay well. I got to eat. I have a family to feed and provide for.

I would love to leave a great legacy and wealth for them, so things are a bit easier for them later in life. But, of course, they need to earn it and work hard, like I have.

But, with all seriousness, I would like to be a media personality or commentator covering political and social news or even a television show host, traveling the world and documenting

weird and unique things and showing how different cultures, traditions and people all around the world connect yet are so different but similar.

One of my favorite television channels right now is *Viceland*. I love the concept and the variety of shows. *Viceland* seems to think outside the box and offer things that most channels would never touch. Yet, the stories and shows are so intriguing and interesting and fun at the same time.

Actually, I do not think I have only one dream job. I get inspired and interested in a ton of stuff. So, my dream job or jobs may be a lengthy list.

Getting back to the point, I have lots of inventive ideas and I keep a log of all of my invention ideas. Some of them, of course, may not be winners. But, there are some ideas that no one has created yet. If I had the money and support to innovate, I believe these would really help society as a whole and how we do things in our daily lives.

I have done the R & D in my head (so to speak), then compared them to real projects and many of my ideas are doable. My mind is usually looking at both the short-term and long-term analysis and crunching numbers. Lots of people who I meet like how I think, and some say I could possibly make some people lots of money.

I am usually that person who thinks of things that most people don't and others gain a new and different perspective. My friends and family often joke that I am like a walking and talking computer (when I want to be). But, when they want some solid, sound advice, I am one of the people they usually come to me.

Q: Could you describe your childhood?

A: Actually, I loved my childhood. Like any childhood, there are things a person did not like and other things the person liked. I would not change it for the world. I think my childhood helped in shaping my desire to do good in the world and succeed.

It was not a bad childhood experience. Mostly, it actually was fun. I have so many memories, some good, some bad, but mostly good.

I was born and raised in Louisiana and I love my home state. It is like a country within itself; from the food, people, culture and dialect, it is so unique from north Louisiana to south Louisiana.

I lived in south Louisiana pretty much all of my life, so you could call me a bayou country girl. Many areas in south Louisiana consists of bayou and swampy areas. Living in south Louisiana, you become familiar and comfortable with the various dialects and languages and may speak many different versions of the same language. But, most people know what you mean.

Also, coming from a small, tightknit bayou and fishing community, I lived in an area where most people tended to help one another and watch out for you and your family. They took pride in

their culture, family and hard work and success. Gumbo, jambalaya, fishing, crayfish and Mardi Gras are so commonplace that if you do not like any of those things, something is wrong.

Growing up, I guess you can say my life was a little like *Forrest Gump*, but not really (for those of you who get my humor). My mother was a social worker and my stepfather was a fisherman. Being from a relatively small area, which is not that small anymore, everyone pretty much knew everyone. And everyone knew my mother. My mother was a helpful person to a lot of people. When they saw me, my brother and sister, they knew we were my mother's children, so, people tended to watch out for us.

This also meant if I got into any trouble or did anything (or someone was messing with me), people knew about it and it traveled very quickly back to my mother and my family. Most people, if not all, knew that I was a good child, though not perfect, and that I was not a child to cause trouble and I did not mess with anyone.

If I did, which was very rare, the first question they would ask is what the other person did to me to make me do anything against my own interests because I did not bother anyone but was a very nice person, probably too nice. So, everyone knew that if someone was messing with me or made me go against my own interests, they knew that the other person (or people) had the problem and not me and that the other person (or people) were not good people.

I come from a fairly large family, and I was the oldest out of my mother's three children. So, as a child, I could not go anywhere by myself. If I wanted to go to the movies with friends and their family, I always had one of my uncles, my stepdad, or a trusted family friend with me. By the time, my little sister and brother were older, they had less "supervision" (so to speak).

As a child, I considered myself a prankster. I would say that I was not the perfect child. Who is? I may have given my mother a few gray hairs but not too many. Later in my adult life, my mother said that I, my sister and my brother were good children and never really gave her any trouble. Again, this is not to say we were perfect. But, for the most part, we became responsible adults.

My mother was strict (but not too strict) and had certain expectations. But, it was nothing unrealistic of any caring parent but very realistic for a parent wanting the best for his or her children as well as wanting their children to be protected and safe. Who doesn't want this as a caring parent? Today, I think most of those values are not even seen today in some parents. Her strictness and expectations is what I think put the fire 'under my butt' to succeed.

Q: What are little known facts unknown to your readers and fans?

A: Well, if I giveaway too many little known facts, it would not be surprisingly. Or better yet, it would not give my readers and fans anything to research. So, I will give two little known facts about myself.

The first little known fact is that Bea Giovanni is not my real name but a pen name. My first name is a nickname by my friends and the second name is my given middle name. For the

sleuth readers, you would know how to find out my real name by doing the research. The reason for the pen name is to separate my professional life from my creative and artistic life (writing and other creative projects). I have written scholarly articles and I did not want to confuse my readers with that of my creative and artistic works.

And here is the second and last little known fact, since I would like to maintain some mystery behind the novel, *Bernice Rathe*, and other books or creative projects to come. Well, this little known second and last fact is that, under my real name, I was an extra in the movie, *A Lesson Before Dying*. How I became an extra is due to timing and pure luck.

It was 1998 and I had just come home for the holiday break from graduate school. Word got around in my bayou area that a movie was filming in our area and there was a casting call at a community center (I believe). Anyway, I went to the casting call, where they took our pictures and contact information. The same day they notified me that I would be an extra in the movie.

Though it was an uncredited role and I spent one day on the set, it was fun and exciting. This was my first taste of "Hollywood" and I loved it. Everyone behind the scenes were working towards one goal, which was making a great movie.

My role was a very brief one (and if you blinked you probably would miss my role in the movie). I played a young woman working from the store in the first 5 minutes of the movie. I was the one walking from the store as the vehicle with the three men passed. I was very slender during that time (as I was for most of my life). You barely saw my face, if any shot of my face was seen in the movie, since it was a very short and quick scene.

I wore this old white (possibly old crème color dress) and a dark wig for the extra role. This was required as a part of the wardrobe, which they provided to me and others. I believe it took approximately 5 to 8 takes for this particular scene, which I am sure was quick and easy, compared to other scenes.

Q: What inspired you to write? Where did you get the idea to write *Bernice Rathe*?

A: This is a very good question. My life's journey inspired me to write and provided the context for the novel. I have had an amazing life journey so far, hitting many milestones and breaking barriers, from my early beginnings, being successful, to teaching K-12 at an early age to being a former government lawyer (not confused with an attorney) and later becoming a United Nations Delegate for a NGO.

And the journey continues to date. Life experiences and also my wild imagination pushed me to write. It is like a healing process. So, when I started to write, I thought writing freely should not be this easy and revealing.

But, I was actually correct in thinking that it was a healing process. During my initial writing process, my significant other, who is a school counselor and, in her part-time practice, a

therapist, and my friends, who are professionals in their own right, told me that writing can be a form of healing, called narrative healing.

So, I wrote and wrote, but decided that I did not want to publish it and wanted to use it as my healing tool and nothing else. After some time went by, I had friends and family who were waiting for my book. I actually thought everyone would forget about the book I was writing. But, they didn't.

Like my family and close and trusted friends, they gave me some feedback. All of them were supportive and encouraged me to continue writing and to publish it. So, I did.

Q: What can your readers and fans do to support your work or you (the author)?

A: Readers and fans can support my work and myself as an author by purchasing *Bernice Rathe* (paperback, eBook, or both) and spread the word about the awesomeness of the novel. Buying *Bernice Rathe* is a big part of an author's success and ability to provide more creative works. *Bernice Rathe* can be purchased through major book retailers. Some indie bookstores may sell it; if not, request it and buy it. You can also purchase the book on bernicerathethebook.com.

Q: Was it difficult writing in a different genre, other than academically?

A: Not really. I enjoy writing in a different genre, than the academic one. In academic writing, you are constrained in how you write, whereas in fictional writing, you are not. This is because you are establishing yourself as an expert in academia, while in the fictional writing world, you are writing for fun (or to entertain others). This is no matter the errors or mistakes you make in writing, it is purely for fun and entertainment. Despite what people may think, I never take myself too seriously. So, fictional writing was a perfect fit.

However, I also love the research and writing process in academic writing. You are able to learn and apply what you learned, while educating others and corroborating with other experts. I absolutely love these aspects about the process. This skills and experiences I have acquired over the years helped me to create this fictional novel, since it was already researched.

With that said, my academic writing and background is not placed on the shelf and forgotten about. That knowledge and background could be useful later in some other venture. I just do not know how yet. I have written about some complex areas, such as intellectual property, international and domestic law, anti-terrorism, business, innovation and even religion. Those are some pretty challenging topics, and my research and corroboration has helped many researchers and experts on these complex topics.