

A NOVEL IDEA

Author spins science fiction tale

Humble man ‘reverse-engineers’ his first book, a story about clones and what it means to be free

By Don Maines

First-time novelist George Wright Padgett of Humble didn’t set out to write a book.

He just wanted to tell a story about what makes you human and what it means to be free.

To explore those ideas, Padgett created characters that are clones because they would have no backgrounds or human experiences.

Then he “worked backwards.”

“I reverse-engineer my stories,” said Padgett, explaining how he devised a plot for his book, “Spindown,” that would lead to the characters to question their existence as clone slaves.

Setting the story 200 years in the future placed “Spindown” in the genre of “hard science fiction,” which is characterized by technology that is theoretically plausible, in contrast to the “soft” sci-fi comic books and movies that inspired Padgett’s love for storytelling.

“When ‘Star Wars’ came out in the summer 1977, I was 10. My father dropped me off at the theater and I would hide in the back after each show and stay to watch it again and again,” said Padgett. “For better or worse, I can quote the entire movie from start to finish.”

Twenty-five years later, Padgett found an enthusiastic audience for his tall tales in his young daughter, who’s now 13.

“I would tell her outlandish bedtime stories that were as good, and sometimes better, than the books that I was buying for her at the time,” he said.

As his daughter and son, who’s now 10, got older, Padgett turned to writing stories for himself. Each time the story determined the genre and the format.

“For example,” he said, “I’ve done a lot of short stories, but the different facets of ‘Spindown’ wouldn’t fit into a short story, so it became a novel. Now I’m working on a second book that’s a different genre. It’s a psychological horror, along the lines of a ghost story.”

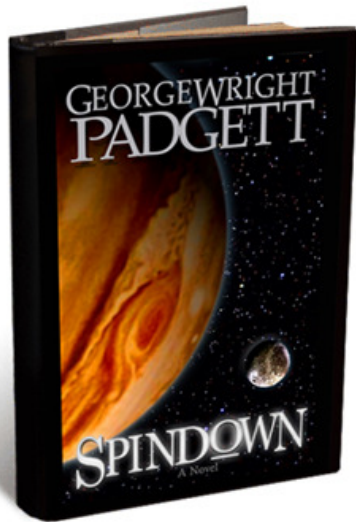
Another idea, he said, seemed best expressed in a theatrical setting, so he decided to collaborate with a former Humble High School alumni, George Kovacik, on making it a stage musical.

Padgett is writing the book, or script, for the show, entitled “The Locksmith of PlentyGood.”

Both men are writing the music and the lyrics, making use of Padgett’s skill as a pianist and Kovacik’s mastery of the guitar.



Photo: David Hopper / for the Chronicle



"Spindown" is the new novel from George Wright Padgett

In 2014, they hope to enlist actors from local colleges for a reading of the musical, with an eye towards producing it in Houston in 2015-2016 before bowing on Broadway or off-Broadway in 2017.

"Spindown" was published this year by Grey Gecko Press in Katy. It is available electronically, in print, and as an audiobook.

"It isn't self-publishing," said Padgett, who also wanted to avoid the limitations of going through the "Big Six" publishing houses.

"I wanted final say over the editing process, comparable to what's known in the film industry as final cut," said Padgett.

"I went to a meet-up of other writers and was introduced to Jason Aydelotte of a small publishing company. I was so enamored with what they were doing different, I immediately submitted my manuscript."

"We're a full-service publishing house," said Aydelotte, founder and 'Chief Gecko' of Grey Gecko Press. Padgett, was their first author to submit in the hard sci-fi genre, and mentioned that he splits the royalties from the book with the publisher, editor, and graphic artist who worked on the final product.

Aydelotte call "Spindown" one of his favorite hard science fiction books. "I've read two to three thousand books in the science fiction genre alone, and George's writing draws me back to my love of classics like "THX1138" and the works of Isaac Asimov"

To read the first chapter of "Spindown" free and learn more about Grey Gecko Press, visit www.greygeckopress.com
