

Gainesville police lieutenant launching second book in Oct

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Art Adkins thought everyone could do what he does. Not necessarily what he does as a lieutenant for the Gainesville Police Department, but certainly what he does off-duty. Writing.

Adkins is launching the second book in his Slade Lockwood series with book signings in Cedar Key, Gainesville and Ocala during the first weekend of October.

"Power Grid" tells the story of how Adkins' fictional, retired Los Angeles Police Department detective tries to keep an ancient power source from becoming a war weapon in the modern world.

"I just thought everybody could do this. I thought everyone could write," Adkins said. "When an idea comes to me, I can tell you in five minutes where it will go. It's like the hero walks up to me and whispers in my ear."

Adkins' first book, "The Oasis Project," published in 2007, introduced readers to Lockwood and was "about 90 percent fact," Adkins said. The second installment, "Power Grid," "is closer to 95 percent fact." Next up in the series will be "Mind Walkers."

"As an author, it's my responsibility to provide escapism," Adkins said. "When you are done with this book, I want you to be — No. 1 — angry that it's over, and — No. 2 — be angry that the next one is not out yet."

There is a fair amount of Adkins' personal life woven into his novels.

Like Adkins, Lockwood moved to Florida after working as a cop in Los Angeles.

A major character in "Power Grid" is dying of Lou Gehrig's disease, the same disease that struck one of Adkins' uncles.

Slade Lockwood's names were lifted from a relative and a clerk. Slade was on the name tag worn by a Home Depot clerk when Adkins was buying windows, and Adkins' 6-foot-4 paternal uncle was Lockwood "Shorty" Adkins.

Among the recurring characters is Dustin Zane, a nod to Adkins' 23-year-old son, Dustin Zane Adkins, a former 6-foot-7, 300-pound football player who attended Dartmouth and is now a defensive line coach and high school math teacher.



Erica Brough/Staff photographer
Local author Art Adkins is shown with his second published book, Power Grid, Wednesday, September 8, 2010 at the Gainesville Sun in Gainesville, Fla.

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Soon to be incorporated will be Adkins' oldest son, University of Florida alum Arthur Adkins IV, 25, who is a computer specialist in Tallahassee.

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While Adkins is working on "Mind Walkers," he also will be contemplating how much longer to continue in his full-time career. He has been a Gainesville Police officer since 1993.

"My first possible retirement date is June 1, 2011," Adkins said. "I'm not sure what I will do. But I do know this: I will keep writing."