



**Traces of Guilt**  
by Dee Henderson

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## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS WITH DEE HENDERSON

### 1. *Traces of Guilt* is more of a mystery than many of your novels, as Lieutenant Evie Blackwell delves deep into solving two cold cases. Did you enjoy that change?

I did. The title alludes to the reality that many times there are only traces in the case records to point toward who is guilty. I like the unfolding nature of a cold case mystery where the answer to the puzzle is there and can be found but only if enough details are put together and in the right order. Yet it's not going to yield the truth easily. I'm very much a first reader when I write these stories, often not knowing how the mystery will be solved until I'm writing those scenes that bring it together.

### 2. There's also romance in *Traces of Guilt*, with the Thane brothers having interesting lives, although the romance is broader than just Evie's story.

I wanted the challenge of a complex story, of three brothers intricately involved in each other's lives, including a family focus that has them dealing with problems together. Each brother is in a different stage of romance. Gabriel is just meeting someone, Joshua is renewing a relationship from his past, and Will is ready to ask Karen to be part of his future. The flow of their stories fits their family and makes for a nice romance layer the mysteries could rest upon.

### 3. You created an interesting contrast between Evie Blackwell, who works for the State Police Bureau of Investigations, and Gabriel Thane, the sheriff of Carin County. Both are in law enforcement, and yet they have very different mind-sets about their jobs.

They do. I wanted to present the difference between what it is like being a cop versus being a detective. A detective's job is done when the case goes back into the box. As sheriff, Gabriel's job is just beginning once a case gets solved; he learns from what happened and applies that knowledge to better protect the community. Law enforcement has a great deal of variety to it, and I enjoy exploring the differences across these books.

### 4. The underlying theme of the novel seemed to be that what is hidden in the past will always come to light, that crimes will eventually be revealed, showing the real truth about who people are.

It's taken from a passage in the Bible: "For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open." It's a caution, a warning, that what people think they got away with, God has already seen, and He will bring those hidden things into the light for everyone else to see. I think that's one reason we like crime fiction so much, when justice is done by the end of the story. God cares about justice, and He made us to value and appreciate justice as well.

### 5. Do you plan to write more Evie Blackwell stories in the future?

Evie has an interesting future ahead of her as a detective, and also in her married life. I do plan to explore her life in coming stories, either as the main character or as a significant character in another's story.