Author's Note

I am a reader. I am a writer. Over the course of seventy-five plus years, reading thousands of books, it is my observation that, except for the formula and money writers, (yeah you Patterson) I think authors tend to create stories and characters that come from their past and their fantasies. From Beowulf, through Homer, Chaucer, Shakespeare, to the modern classical writers, Dante, Wilde, Dickens, Poe just to name a few. Then the mass of present writers. Their protagonists tend to be their better or worse selves. They populate their stories with their characters enhanced by their imagination. The author's I read most, Child, Parker, Cussler, Rollins, Connelly all unabashedly pattern their protagonists after themselves. Readers will note that there are often very disturbing characters and actions for their paladins to navigate.

Where do these come from? How did the writer of Beowulf dream up Grendel? I have made some very bad villains in *A Wandering Man* and *Hit and Run*. And then killed them. I do it again in *Survival*. Is writing a way to deal with past hurt? I don't know. Once I have written a story and killed my villains, I have to start another.

I was asked once about whether I identified with any of my characters. Of course I do. As with any author, there is some of me in all my characters. But more so in Jacob, Whitey and Brandy, in *A Wandering Man*. Yes, even Brandy. Also in William, Sandy, James, Georgia and Hank, in *Hit and Run* These people are the better part of me. Now I know that I could never be as smart, capable and loyal as they are. And now when writing *The Edge of Extinction*, I came to admire all the characters. Just for the record, if the aliens came when I was alive, I would be one of the casualties. A consultant on *Survival* once said it must be fun playing god. He was right. Writing fiction is a little like that. You make your characters and put them into various scenarios. But then they take on a life of their own. I find that if I try to make them do something out of character they resist. Just like real people. Of course I'm just talking to myself. Right?

My self-stated aim when I started writing and publishing (very late in life) was to be entertaining. In the beginning I was just entertaining myself and my wife, who was my test reader and best critic. I had no hope of actually publishing. But later some people convinced me to do just that. Thanks family. Maybe I can actually tell an entertaining story while letting go of my demons. Hah! Good luck with that, Robert.

Those who have read my previous books will note the dissimilarities of venue. My first novel *A Wandering Man*, was an historical fiction about a man in late nineteenth century Oregon. It was a work inspired by my wife, from when we owned a cottage in Seaside, Oregon. The story started out to be about a gunfight in Seaside in late 1898 and grew into a saga about a boy becoming a man. When she died, with the help of a knowledgeable journalist, I published it out of memory of her.

My second novel *Hit and Run* is about how ordinary small town people respond and persevere under the threat of international terrorism. This was inspired by a chance encounter with a speeding Cadillac limo at a McLaughlin intersection in Gladstone Oregon, where I lived for a while. One more step into that intersection and I would have been with my wife that day. After I

made out my will, I began to think 'what if.' The unabashedly self-indulgent novel grew in my mind.

Before I get all maudlin, I also started *The Edge of Extinction (originally titled Survival)* while married. This one is science fiction, and again is set in Seaside area, where I now live. I cannot explain how these came to be. I do know that once an idea is formed, the story takes a life of its own. It's like I am simply chronicling, following events like a historian. Except for *Hit and Run*, (and even that one seemed to progress on its own) the stories are not really mine, they simply are. I only hope they are entertaining. I had a lot of fun writing them and I learned a lot too. Every time I started to describe a setting or character I had to research it or them. From the past, to the present, to the future, it's been a continuing ride.

*The Edge of Extinction* is of course a work of fiction. Although actual buildings and landmarks are noted, they are described and used fictitiously. The people, events, and places are from the author's imagination.

Although I had some help, any and all errors are mine. Most authors list all their help and then say any errors are the author's. What about all those people? Didn't they see that blooper on page 205? Hah!