

IN CONVERSATION WITH ALICE CLARK-PLATTS

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Alumna Alice Clark-Platts always wanted to write. Her career in law proved a useful stepping stone.

You graduated in 1998, but only started with Herbert Smith Freehills as a trainee in 2003. What happened in between?

After graduating, I worked in television as a researcher for television documentaries. I then took a year off to go travelling in Australia. When I returned, I decided to train to be a lawyer, working as a paralegal for one year; then completing the conversion and finally the LPC.

You trained and qualified: why did you not stay with HSF after completing your training?

I wanted to work as a litigator and had a great training at HSF. I knew, however, that my interests lay more in human rights and public law than in corporate litigation.

Tell me about your time with Government, and your interest in human rights law?

I loved working for the Treasury Solicitor's department. At first, I worked in immigration - primarily in judicial review cases. I then moved to general public law dealing with tribunal work as well as very interesting work in the Court of Appeal and Supreme Court.

I had always been interested in human rights law and this was cemented by an internship I completed at the UN International Criminal Tribunal in Tanzania which prosecuted the perpetrators of the Rwandan genocide. I then undertook a part-time masters degree in human rights law at the London School of Economics.

Why did you leave public service?

My husband, Tom Platts, then an associate for HSF, went on secondment to the Singapore office. I was pregnant with our second daughter and so took maternity leave initially and then a career break.

We have since made our life on the red dot and writing has taken over as my main career.

Have you always wanted to be a writer?

My father is a writer and I have always loved English literature and reading. I never envisaged making it a career though! It was always just something I dabbled in for fun.

How useful was your time as a lawyer for your writing?

Very. Lawyers have to be good at writing and expressing ideas coherently. Anything which enables practice at those things will be useful for a career as a writer.

What has drawn you to write crime thrillers?

From an early age, I have always loved Agatha Christie and reading crime thrillers.

When I first set out to write a novel, it became a sort of game or challenge to set myself - whether I could actually write one myself.

Who is Erica Martin, and what is the significance of this character?

DI Erica Martin is the police inspector in my first two books *Bitter Fruits* and *The Taken*. That series is set in Durham and she is new to the city in the first book where she has to uncover the murderer of a university student.

Your new book is The Flower Girls. Will you be promoting the book in person, other than in Singapore?

The Flower Girls was published on 24 January and I flew to the UK for a promotional tour then which was very exciting. I am also heading to Sydney, Australia in April for promotional purposes.

For those who might be interested, the book is a novel about nature versus nurture. It asks at what age can you become culpable of a crime and whether anyone can ever be truly rehabilitated.

Can you tell me more about the Singapore Writers' Group?

When I started writing in 2012, I set up the SWG so I could have other people with whom to share work I was writing.

Writing can be a lonely business. But we now have over 1,000 members and the group has become an integral part of the writing community in Singapore.

Can you tell me more about the Angus McDonald Trust, in which you are involved?

Angus was the fiancé of a great friend of mine who tragically died from cancer. The trust was set up in his memory to raise money for grass roots medical organisations in Myanmar - a country which he photographed beautifully and was passionate about.

What comes next for you?

I am currently working on my new novel which will be published next year.

Do you stay in touch with Herbert Smith Freehills or the alumni?

Yes, very much so. Tom and I have many friends from our time at HSF and value them greatly.

* Alice is always keen to hear from anyone interested in writing or books. Her website is www.aliceclarkplatts.com and she is on Twitter at @aclarkplatts

The Flower Girls can be bought [here](#).