

# IN CONVERSATION WITH ALICE CLARK-PLATTS

02 April 2019 | Alumni Profile

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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](http://www.aliceclarkplatts.com) and she is on Twitter at @aclarkplatts

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