

Bob 0:00

Sir. Hello. How are you today? I'm good. You got me on my third day of my COVID vote go T and I've been shaving and I don't know why.

Hudson 0:12

Yeah, it seems people have either taken the Viking approach and have let it go full beard or are keeping it hyper, hyper focused or hyper hyper shaved rather.

Bob 0:23

I can't go full beard would probably be silver and look weird.

Hudson 0:28

I feel you on that one. I have a whole lot more gray in my beard now than I ever did after a couple of kids and work and adulting and whatnot.

Bob 0:38

Well, my mom was in her 90s in a nursing home and they had to lighten her hair because it was dark brown. And my hair was not going great. But my beard.

Hudson 0:48

Yes, I've got I have my racing stripes on the side. Fortunately, the rest is still Brown, but then coming in very strong. I'm guessing I'm a lot older than you. Yeah. I'll be 39 no Number.

Bob 1:02

Yeah, only by about 22 years.

Hudson 1:04

Yeah. Well, you know, I think that's fortunate for me. Because, you know, I got to grow up reading your books. I thank

Bob 1:10

you for that interview. But I mean, that review by the way, that was really nice. Yeah, I love it when somebody is reviewing my books and actually trying to see what they are instead of wishing there was something they wanted differently, you know? Yeah, somebody reads a book and tries to get what the author's trying to do. That's a that's a better review for the author. I'm glad I love that review because you hit on all the notes. I was hoping the series would bring in relentlessly bring it particularly

Hudson 1:38

well, thank you. I'm really I'm glad to hear that it uh, when I joined robots like a year ago, and they said Who do you like what do you want to do? What do you want to write on? And

you know, I did I've written on you know, Picard and some Star Trek and some Star Wars. But back then I said, you know, the real thing is I want to I want to talk to Bob Salvador when the series is finished and says it's kind of a 30 years is everything. Why

Bob 2:01

does everyone think the series is finished?

The trilogy? Okay,

just the trilogy. So many people think it's the last book ever.

Hudson 2:09

No. I mean, that is certainly I went on to, I went on to read it. And I went and I asked, because I always I've always appreciated people went on and actually said, if you could talk to an author, what would you ask? And so I went on to the Forgotten Realms subreddit and the gist subreddit and said, What do you want to ask? And like, by far and away that was the the overwhelming question is what's next? What's happening?

Bob 2:31

But it's amazing to me that after 36 books 39 if you count the stone of tomorrow, and 44 to count the cleric books, and then of course the all the short stories, yeah, aging, may people still want more. It's really kind of satisfying.

Hudson 2:48

It speaks to the to the stories you tell like I was, I mean, I just I've looked back and like it's been years since I've gone back and read the cleric quintet. I read that a three or four times Like some of those stories that you've written just, they just they tell such good stories, but then they also are just so readable. And it's one of those things like you can focus on different aspects or read different ways and like I don't know of any other authors or many other authors that really write things that really withstand.

Bob 3:15

I'm trying to remember the review and if you mentioned it, but if you read demon wars, yeah, way back. And you were the newer demon wars books, the coven trilogy that just killed

Hudson 3:24

a child of the Mad God. Yeah, yeah, those are exciting.

Bob 3:29

I think that's, I feel satisfied about that trilogy as anything I've ever written.

Hudson 3:34

That's your think that's your favorite.

Bob 3:36

I wouldn't say favorite. I think Dark Elf homecoming in generations both have a story I've been wanting to tell for a lot of years. Dark Elf is always going to be special. And the first game of War series was special because I built a world. And so I've been able to go from there with the highway man and those four books. I love the highwayman. And now with Alan's story in the coven got completely out of control from what I expected. I thought it was going to stay right there in that area and all of a sudden, wait a minute who's over those mountains to the west? Yeah. And that's where the show Can I came from, because you haven't figured it out those mountains of the Rockies and fairy springs mouth heavenly. And look big is Lake Tahoe. Ha. And the show Can I the reason why they look very Aztec and Mayan in terms of their language. Yeah, couples is because they're that's the LA bass.

Hudson 4:38

Huh? I'm, I'm just south of that in San Diego.

Bob 4:41

And if you look at the original demon wars, right? That's like the North Eastern. That's like la the the Maritimes in Canada.

Hudson 4:50

Oh, you know,

it's funny. I actually lived. I lived in the northeast for most of high school, when I was reading those Say graduating 2000. So yeah, because the original didn't work, right. The end of the 90s. Right?

Bob 5:05

I even got the Bay of Fundy in there. Yeah. The original demon wars word. I think 95 or 96? Yeah. was the first book. Yeah. And they ran for seven bucks. Yeah. And then went back into the highway man a couple years later and did those four books with tour. And then I just went back again and did the cover. Yeah. I'll be going back to the only the only question now is well, I think it's been answered is whether I'm going to get a publisher or whether I'm going to self publish it. So I think by the publisher, there's one more publisher that I want to give a try to be and I've been very frustrated. This is off the record. We're not taping.

Hudson 5:42

It's taping but I'll edit anything out you want like it's just if I only have one option on zoom to just record or not. Wait, I can hit stop. You mean hit stop.

Bob 5:51

Well, I already gave it away anyways. Okay. Yeah. I have one. I have been not I haven't been thrilled with the Demon wars is a tough thing for publishers. Because when I'm writing books everybody wants drifts. Yeah. Okay. I didn't know if we were talking or not because there's some things I can't say other things I can

Hudson 6:12

Oh of attraction send us and can edit out anything like that's whenever I've done interviews in the past. Oh, we're

Bob 6:18

cool. We're cool. We're cool today. I just contractually, there's only certain things I can say one way or the other on different options, but demon wars, is it tough stuff for people the same way that Landover was a tough sell for people when Terry was doing shannara Yeah, because people want your main series I'm having a main series is like being in a very successful band and then trying to launch a solo career or going to a different band. Very hard to do. The books have done well. They've all done very well. And what's really satisfying is that the people who read like the demon wars books, most of those people that I talked to prefer demon wars, the further that series to dritz more like it just As much yeah, that's really satisfying. Yeah. But it's hard for publishers to break through the noise. Yeah. But there's one in particular now that I want to work with and and they're they want to work with me too. And that might that might break the logjam. Otherwise, I'll Self Publish if I do more kids. And adults have to decide whether I want to do more books on anything because I'm trying to find a better life work balance, tell you the truth. I took the first four months of this year off that's the first vacation I had 33 years. Yeah, and writing doesn't stop it goes to bed with me gets up in the morning with me. I take it to meals. My wife is talking to me. And after about five minutes, she realizes I'm in the Forgotten Realms or income or something. Yeah, it's a it's an all encompassing curse, if you will. And also the joy, right?

Hudson 7:48

Well, Holly mentioned you just had a grandchild.

Bob 7:51

And number six,

wow, all boys. Wow. I have a hockey team. So

I'm play goalie till he can stand up.

Hudson 8:01

Just lay in front of the goal.

Bob 8:02

Yeah, I don't think any of the others except maybe the 10 year old be able to lift the puck anyway. So yeah, they're all little. We're excited we go to Disney. It's gonna look like kindergarten.

Hudson 8:14

That's fantastical congratulations. It's a it's I've got two sons, an eight year old and a five year old. And it's, I can't imagine six. That's a lot.

Bob 8:25

Well, I'm at. I got a 10 year old grandson, a two four year old, a three year old and an almost two year old and an infant.

Hudson 8:35

Well, I have three kids. Yeah. It's Yeah, it's pretty cool. And you're still in the northeast, right?

Bob 8:42

I'm in Massachusetts for most of the year and I'm in California for the winters.

Hudson 8:47

Oh, nice. Well, if you ever find your way ever find your way down to San Diego, or even LA. I

Bob 8:53

go all the time.

Hudson 8:54

I would love to I'd love to tip a glass and say hello in person. I live in South Bay

in LA South Bay. Yeah. Oh, wow. Okay, you're like an hour and a half north of me.

Bob 9:07

Where are you in?

Hudson 9:09

North San Diego?

Bob 9:11

Yeah, we go there all the time I go there. You should go to mysterious galaxy. Yeah, I still do because there's a new one now. They removed it. I found that they found the buyer. But I got a mysterious galaxy for every book release. That's if I'm in California at all. It's my favorite store in the world, one mouth. Although Gibson's in New Hampshire starting to become a favorite for me as well. They're really great. But we go to San Diego, the San Diego Zoo in the

wild animal farm all the time. A wonderful usually for my grandson's birthday will rent a will with a couple of rooms down in Carlsbad. Mm hmm. And when they were younger, we would do Lego Land and then San Diego Zoo. Yeah. San Diego Zoo is one of my favorite places in the world. We get on there all the time. Yeah, of course I go down every now and then I'll go down to Oh Irvine, the Irvine area because I got a ton of friends at blizzard. Yeah. I know a bunch of the people there from 38 Studios and one of my best friends for the last 30 years is has been working there for a few years. Yeah, actually, I I'm all over so cow I love it. I thought I was gonna hate it. I love it.

Hudson 10:17

I Yeah, same for me. I it's I've lived all over the country and out of the country some and it is my favorite place to live.

Bob 10:24

Anyway, we were there when the COVID hit. Yeah. And in April, I said, Okay, if we're going to, we're going to get home. We got to get home now before they start opening up the airlines. Yeah. And we came home on an almost empty flight through the airports and got back here. Back here is much better if we're stuck at the house because I have a big yard. Yeah. I have like a gym in my house. I have a batting cage that my wife got me saying go ahead balls. That's awesome. It's been too hot last few weeks. So got a pool. You know, I got this is the house my kids grew up in. We've been here for 30 almost 20 or 2526 years. Yeah. 27 and it's a big yard and we got we've built it our way. My house in California is more a place. It's nice, but it's got a nice view. But it's more where you sleep and get up in the morning and then go down the beach. Yep. Yeah. It's funny. I wasn't even a beach person. So I moved out there and now I could just spend all day down there. Yeah. waves.

Hudson 11:23

Yeah, it's, uh, it's pretty magical here. We're about five minutes from the San Diego Zoo. And then that was close to the beach as well. So getting out here from the Midwest for my boys was a big

was a big big plus. So it's um, it's a fun place to live.

Bob 11:41

And I still love Massachusetts but the winters beat up my my destroyed knee. I have a destroyed knee.

Hudson 11:47

Yeah, I can't do northeast. Yeah, my right knee is all busted up. And when I lived in Maine, was there for three or four years. It was just it was brutal. just waking up like just

Bob 11:58

even in the summer because Humidity changes. It's like Ouch.

Hudson 12:04

Yeah. Do you like Do you find that you write better in certain environments or climates?

Bob 12:10

Gotta be cool. Yeah. Gotta be like,

I write better in New England I do, or more efficiently in New England than I do in California, because in California, I just want to go outside. Yeah, it's too many distractions now. Hey, let's go take a walk down the strand. All right. Yeah. But like in New England, one of the requirements is my office is cold. Yeah.

Hudson 12:39

Yeah, I'm the same way whenever I do writing or whenever I do any kind of really heavy content work. I've got to like, make it cool, which is a little tougher in Southern California than anywhere. I've determined that 73 degrees is the upper limit to creativity.

I like that. I'm gonna I'm gonna I'm gonna quote you on that one.

Do you have when it's like one of my favorites. question is do you have any favorite snacks? When you're writing? Like you're happy writing?

Bob 13:07

Potato chips? Potato chips?

Yeah. I also I also eat potato chips a lot when I'm playing d&d with my friends or Warcraft with my friends, which really annoys them because the sound coming through the Michael killya

Hudson 13:20

Yeah, it's, it's like you're eating the chip inside of the microphone inside of your mouth. And I love the northeastern us cheese balls. My favorite just tiny little Big Cheese. Goodness.

Bob 13:32

I grew up in a town they had try some potato chips. Well, once I grew up, right, I grew up not far from the factory. Hmm, we could smell them cook. Oh, I mean, we've been. We were kids and the guys on the dock and throw us these giant boxes here. By the way, pretend you're stolen

away into the woods with these giant boxes of chips and

Hudson 13:52

yeah, yeah, so they'll times. Well tell me this. I've got lots of questions and things is there anything in between? Killer, you want to talk about it? I'm going to just start running through them or

Bob 14:03

Yeah, go for it. I'll go off on enough tangents to drive you crazy. I'm good at that.

Hudson 14:08

I love it. Uh, so like one of my overarching questions is like someone who's been reading you since kind of the beginning is like, did you know where you were going when you started in? 88? Like when you first published like, or have like a hint or an idea. I mean, even just, I mean, we can talk spoilers like how I've never I love tales of redemption in general. And I love like in one of your interviews, I wrote it down. You talked about how you love it that where's it Oh, that the hero is going to fail? How do I make them fail? And it's not about where they were yesterday, but where they are today and how you make them realize that and like it like from the crystal shard to relentless? Just it's unbelievable the amount of redemption. I mean, like from Artemis, Yvonne all like just everybody. I mean what like I How did you get there? I didn't get there. When I started.

Bob 15:03

When I started, I was working in finance at a high tech company in Concord, Massachusetts. And I was just thrilled that I was finally getting him and him on a book. Yeah, I had started writing in 1982. I written the main script, got a bunch of rejection letters, sent it back out in 87. That's the book that got me the audition for the Forgotten Realms, which was brand new. Yeah. So I just thought was going to be a one book. I was going to get to write a book, and then I could go on and build my career. I had three little kids or two little kids and a third coming. They didn't pay me a lot of money at all. I mean, it wasn't, it wasn't anything of live on. I had a good job, but I had a good career trajectory into finance in the service department of the major company. And I was doing really well. They're getting promoted and it wasn't until the halflings gem Which was the third book came out? Not when I signed the contract because after at the end of the first one I realized how much I enjoyed writing it. So I put the hook the two hooks in right Bruno's saying, you gotta come with me after tricking dress, and it's the thing he was dying and and atomism church showing up in Bryn Chandran reaches seeing him and freaking out. I even know what I'm missing. Sure he was he was supposed to die. In the next book. I just threw those two hooks in, because I was hoping they give me a second book. It was kind of fun. It was a little extra money for a young family and we were struggling, like so many, right? And then they picked up streams of silver and that was supposed to be the end of it. But then they advertised the third, the third book halflings jam, but they advertised it under the name hooks, revenge

Hudson 16:47



hooks,

Bob 16:48

poor posture, poor posture poor who hooks revenge. And they advertise the third book before they had signed me to a contract

that puts you in a good position. And so I got a new agent.

Yeah. And I said, Let's get a little increase here. And they increase the back to as well, just a little bit in percentages. Still wasn't going to be making a living. And and TSR my other than them Eric kerchief was saying don't quit your day job. Do not quit your day job. And but the first two books had done really well. And now my income was coming up with the writing almost to match what I was making in finance, which wasn't a lot of money by the way. It was not even my age. I'll put it that way. And I was not an old man. Yeah, but it was coming up and it was really starting to make a difference in our life. My wife had gone back to school, got her degree, so she finished her degree so she could go teach. We were doing better the kids were getting a little older, you know? And they gave me the New Deal and everything was going along and I figured that you know, good I get to finish this anyway. And then I was going to put the hook into go to a fourth book, the end of halflings gender on the way down. to retake mythical Hall and TSS Did you know we think people are tired that these characters will go on to something else. Just tie it all up in this book. And so I did the epilogue of halflings Jim ties up with in the last chapter that one I think the epilogue ties up the retaking the Thrall. Yeah. Which was supposed to be, which I had planned for book four. Okay. Okay. And if I was going to get a book for it, so I figured I was done again, I figured I was done. But then the halflings Jim came out in February of 1990. And I hit the New York Times list. And that was a big deal a bigger deal then than it is now. Yeah. Because back then, if a book hit the New York Times, especially a paperback, it wound up in supermarkets. it wound up it came out readers market, it wound up in drugstores. So the orders just began exploding. And the first two books just kept doing well. Right. And then I got a call from Mary kerchief. And she said, Bob, you know, we're getting a ton of mail about this character in particular. And people want to know where he came from. So we were thinking you should come back and read the trilogy, a prequel trilogy to Crystal shard. And maybe it's time you start thinking about your day job. Hmm. And I remember soon after halflings, Jim came out, I got a check. And that one check was way more than my annual salary. Plus, my job had gotten very nasty. I had a new boss we've been friends with, but we had a huge falling out. And she was not happy with me. Yeah. And so it was he I walked out and then I was terrified, because it's three little kids now suddenly, I have no insurance. Yeah. No pension, being fed by a company anymore. So I was terrified. Yeah. And so I just put My shoulder down and just started writing. But my stories are organic. So to go back to your question, I had no idea this was going to happen. I could have never imagined this in a million years. But the reason why there are so many stories of redemption is because that's who I am. I believe that you live your life. Like the Dow, everyone says you're woke. That's the new phrase to each other.

You're woke, you're woke, not woke. I'm waking. I'm always waking. I always want to be waking. I always want to be open to something. Maybe it's better than what I thought before. Yeah. Okay. That's how my characters live. And that's why I've been able to keep going with characters and all these series, because their growth parallels my own. I hope as a human being because to me, the goal has always been even before I was writing. You know, if you're pushing through headwaters, leave you await karma for the people that come behind you. Yeah, that's always been the way I've looked at life. I've looked at responsibility, the community I've looked at. And I think if I do that, and the people around me do that we're all happier, which is real. I told my kids, my wife, I told our kids from the beginning. It's not about what you do, it's about who you are. And the person who wins is the person who smiles the most genuinely smiles not at somebody else's misery, but at your own joy. Yeah. And that's just the way I've lived my life. And so that's what I think the companions were. That's what they did with drugs. And when I see someone like Adam is contrary I don't just want to write them off and kill him as he was the bad guy. Yeah, one of the why, unless it's a demon, right, or an undead monster. I wonder why. Yeah. What was his motivation? What I realized with him in particular was he couldn't look himself in the mirror without the feeling of self loathing.

Hudson 21:55

Oh my god and like in relentless where he was in the the net, and the the hornet's nest and then afterwards when he came out some of those reflections of like, being able, like he was his own judge, I mean, all of that arc, which I'm probably mispronounced the shower on. Just It was so profound, like he was his worst judge like, I mean, he was loading himself and himself that was just that was magical.

Bob 22:19

Like I was really thrilled that Wizards of the Wizards of the Coast been fantastic, by the way, because they even though it's Harper Voyager, now, Wizards of the Coast gets full editorial on me if they want, they can tell me no, you can't do this. No, you know, that's out of our agreement. Yeah. And they let me keep what that character really was, is when the face rest fell apart. And the demons came rolling through lots of things that aren't supposed to be on the material plane and or in physical form, were able to take physical form. And so that character is conscience. It's like the embodiment of conscience. Yeah. And being able to do that was perfect for what I wanted to for the day the amount of I rather Miss contrary, if you will, yeah, you know, and I thought I'm missing Troy was overthrow the patriarchy tell you the truth because I thought that was the I think the perfect redemption story of Adam a century was threatening a priest that he would come back and kill him if he pulled the crap again. And at the end the role of the Patriots, they burned down the monastery or the abbey or whatever it was chapel, and he told that priest you will rebuild it. But if you rebuild it the way it was, I'm gonna come down and burn it again. Bring it down again. And this time you're going to be in it. Yeah. And I thought that was perfect redemption for atomism. Sure, yeah. But then like all kinds of mail, from people saying please don't end it here. We finally

see him turning the corner and starting to like himself or accept who he is. And we want to see more. And these people were sending these heartfelt stories about their own experiences, whether it was drug addiction, or did prison time or Had trauma when they were younger or whatever. And it was like, Okay, I got to stay with this guy, I'm going to learn a lot from him. And that's how I feel about my characters. I learn a lot from them, I put them under tremendous pressure. I make them solve it. And I learned from that.

Yeah, and

so I kept going.

Hudson 24:21

Yeah, his his time around the elemental.

And like, so even just as contemplation about jumping in and what what would what what would happen? I mean, I work I mean, in my in my real job, I work in behavioral health and I do a lot of stuff with that. So those are just those that writing around contemplation of suicide effectively was really well done. And even you know that that been one and the other one is when they were in the pocket dimension in the box waiting to see what happened at the end. And him talking to Dalia and staying was just such a profound beautiful moment like he chose the chance of community that chance of we can do this over. I'm just gonna run off again. You know, I mean, it reminds me I mean, I put it in my review about what you know what just said about walking the roads with friends and like, I'll be honest, like, I've cried many times during your books like and that was just one of those beautiful moments of just it just it pulls that emotion out of

Bob 25:19

you. Well, I think one of my biggest strengths as a writer

I mean, I can I could list a bunch of flaws too, but I won't. I think my one of my biggest strengths as a writer, and this has been true since I was a little kid as I pay attention to what's around me. I don't just take something at face value, whether it's politics or school or whatever else I pay or an individual the problem some of these going through, I look deeper. And so when I wrote spine of the world, I looked deeper. There was someone in my life who had a problem and they killed back when I was a kid. But I looked deeper at that relationship and talk to people who knew that relationship. Because when I wrote span of the world, I knew First of all, I knew that half my readers were not going to like it. And the other half, were going to love it. It was going to be no middle ground. But I knew what I needed to accomplish with wulfgar. In this addiction, yeah, in spite of the world. And so I talked to people, I paid attention, I read everything I could find on it. And I do that all the time. I do it about depression. I do it about narcissism. I do it all the time. And I pay attention to the details. And I go back to source materials in all of my research. I don't just wing it. But I think

I do have a pretty good intuition about people and I'm honest with myself, and my feelings, and I think that's important too. So that might be my that might be why I can get so deeply into the characters. Yeah, that I'm dealing with because what I do is, I think Try pull away all the bullshit. Okay, all of it and strip something down to its bare bones. Yeah, this is the truth of what's going on no matter how many pretty words or whatever you want to put the top of it. Right. And that's what I write about. Wow, with the characters drittes essence. People are saying he's really being preachy, not being preachy. He's not talking to you talking to himself, because he's trying to make himself a better person. And he's not always right either.

Hudson 27:30

I actually had a question about the medic, like, I called him the meditations, but like, have you ever thought about doing a compilation of all the meditations like, yeah,

Bob 27:37

forever in a day?

Hudson 27:39

Want some help? Like I would watch him I'll

Bob 27:41

do it. Huh TSR wants he wouldn't do it.

I guess I did do a once for some of the early books for the one of the draw one of the Rouse box sets. Mm hmm. Maybe as the menza burns them when they put fuel. There are only a few then yeah. You know, we've talked about it, it would have to be done correctly. But yeah, I've been thinking about that ever since I read Paul Allen's review, I think it was some of the companions. Paul used to be the reviewer for Barnes and Noble. And he wrote a view called the Tao of dreads. And he talked about that those together sometime. And you know, I, I would love to do it. I think we're getting to the point where even though I'm you know, I may go forward I I'm still I still I'm still even from the last time I was still wrote the three books after that weren't with the official legends of drifts. I think we could do it now. Even if we cut it off at home at hero, which was the last of the TSR watse books.

Hudson 28:45

I think you could, I mean,

Bob 28:46

Napa, we've got enough material now to fill a book. Yeah, it's it's 100,000 words of essays.

Hudson 28:53

Yeah. And it's, I mean, some of those like I've gone back and reread some of them, some of them I've got like tabs and go back and look at and like His when he was running from the retriever Whooh. I mean, just the the clarity of purpose and the clarity of what he needed to do and that his like, releasing his corporeal form, it was just, I still get goosebumps, like from that, like, I mean, just that whole arc and then yeah, I would I mean, I would love to see that I'm sure you've got more than that people to help but pulling something like that together, is it you've created an approach to life that I think a lot of people myself, I mean specifically speak for myself, like, how I approach things, how I look at things. I can look back at my life and look at your different series as bookmarks and what I was going through at that time,

Bob 29:44

that's how I feel about my books. Now, when I when they put the short stories together in the collection by the collected stories of The Legend of dritz is what they call those and involves all my short stories. I had them for dragon magazine, or as extra chapters. In some of the earlier books for special editions, when they put that together, I was supposed to go through and read each one, and then annotate it. You know, what was I thinking and doing look just a page about each one. And when I did it, I could remember exactly where it was exactly what I was thinking. And why I wrote the story. It was like looking at photo albums. It was very, it was very cool. But yeah, I get a lot of that. I think there are a lot of people of like mind and I've tapped into that. Yeah, you know, it. I didn't plan it to be this way. I didn't even do the essays in the first three books. Yeah, they started with so much texture to it. They started with homeland because I wanted to write the story of dritz from first person then I realized that would be happy if I do it when he's born. Right and that'll be hard to do the fight scenes I like to do yeah, if I read it in first person and plus Rogers allows the already set the bar way too high for me on first with Amber because you can't do first person better than that, right? So I just decided to add those little sections, and I did it. It was kind of a whim to do it, you know. And then I went back later and put them in the first three books, I think for the science fiction book club edition. Or it was for the first Compendium edition that they did. I'm not sure which. But yeah, they've become a real important part of the series to me. I've gotten. I can't tell you how many hundreds of emails, pm letters, or just encounters I've had with people who talk about them like that some people don't like them at all, only Maria, which is fine. Other people. And that's the See, that's the first thing you learn when you're writing books, and they're getting out there and people are reading them is how different the reader experiences. Yeah, like I've got people who read my books and think it's just popcorn entertainment. And I'm not saying that as a pejorative because I think that's great if you're if you're buying a book, and it gives you eight hours of just popcorn entertainment, then you got your money's worth. Now got other people who are telling me they read them as diversions, like soldiers in the field, they'll read them as diversion stuff to think about what they're doing. You know, at night, they have to think about they have to do the next day, that type of thing. And the people who read them and tell me it's changed my life. Or I was I had cancer and just gave me. drips gave me the courage to fight on, or I was in prison, and I read these books. I'm never going back to prison. Yeah, thank you. Or I had

drug problems. You hear these things I had no one was my wife sided crying was where the book sank. guy comes up to me and he says, I had no friends in high school. I was beat up and then he was crying and she started crying. I'm starting to cry. He's telling me they became his friends. Yeah. And that's the incredible privilege of being a published author is most authors will hear stories like that. Because something you did and you have no idea how you did it. By the way, I could go teach my classes on writing or whatever. But a lot of this is just yet it's instinctive. You just Do what you think will work or what you want and hope other people catch on. But most working authors have heard from fans, those types of stories. They've also heard some pretty nasty stuff with the internet. But that's a whole different argument. Who cares, right? You don't write your books for people that don't like them. You write them for people that do, right. But that's the privilege of being an author or creator, actor, an athlete. Yeah, a sculptor, a painter, whatever. That's the privilege of it is that your work can touch someone. That's the privilege of being a school teacher. Yeah, right. has a school teacher feel when a kid comes back after 10 years and says, You changed my life? Yeah, that's how I feel when I get those letters. It matters. And again, you make the world a better place. If I made the world a better place for them. Their letter makes the world a better place for me. Right. And that's the whole point of being here. Yeah,

Hudson 33:52

absolutely. I did have one one specific. Well, I've a specific question and a general question about relentlessly I have a few others but like, What? Where was Zach soul? Like it's again and again it comes out like it was one of the most commonly asked questions on Reddit and then when I talked to my friends everyone was like that was one of the things they really wanted to know as well. If you can't tell he can't tell but like, Oh, I can tell you

Bob 34:20

I can tell you that you'll never hear it in one of my books from anyone who's not an unreliable narrator

Hudson 34:29

will never share it my my books from anyone All right, I'm gonna have to unwind the double nugget. Okay, here

Bob 34:33

we go. I'm wanting to for you when I found my leaky What did he say? He didn't feel like he had found a guide. Right? He felt like he had found a name to put that on that which was in his essence. So in essence

drittes is agnostic. Yeah.

He hopes and believes there's something better, but it doesn't matter because it's his content. That matters. For this existence this experience in the first book of the companions,

Codex driftsun cabri are arguing about orcs. It says how do we know they're all evil? You people thought drower all evil we're not. And caddy Bree says my Leakey told me that. What a driftsun myleik. He's wrong.

Hudson 35:22

Yeah, I remember that. The gods

Bob 35:25

in the realms.

Are they gods? Or are they

superior beings that use humans as pawns for their own purposes? Yeah,

I mean, to me, it's like they're sending out travel brochures to the afterlife. Yeah, think about it.

Hudson 35:50

Well, and then what you did with Lauth on, oh my god, just such unbelievable storytelling of like, having them go back in time and see things linear, that like part of the the the corruption was the inability to see things as they that was just, I mean, it's not often I've run a lot of fantasy in my life. It's not often that my mind just goes Holy shit, but that whole arc around loss and like the higher being that was just unbelievable. But can I ask you a question? Always? Yeah, please. How

Bob 36:23

do we get where we are today? Do they happen overnight? It doesn't happen one handful at a time.

Hudson 36:28

Yeah, I it's a handful at a time.

Bob 36:32

I probably have people here in this country, living in two different worlds. Mm hmm.

How did they get there?

Yeah, one handful at a time. I studied Marshall McLuhan in college. After I discovered Tolkien I became a communications media major, and all my electives were in literature and communications theory. Marshall McLuhan theory of numbing came through me loud and clear. I've watched it. I've looked for it ever since. And basically, it goes like this. Wrap Up says, I don't give a damn. And people jump up and leave the theater and protest.

And there's outrage and they want to shut the movie down.

Which is hardly the worst thing about *Gone with the Wind*, by the way, but that's a different story. Yeah. The next movie, somebody says, damn. And some people get up and leave, and others go home. Right? Then it happens again. And now Nobody leaves and they're like, Whoa, boy. And now it happens again. Now it happens again, and now happens again. And pretty soon. We're on to George Carlin seven words. Yep. And that's very human. That you accept the level of normalcy, whether it's language or anything else. And then the people who want to shock you have to go a little higher. Yep. And then you'll come up to there and if they want to keep your attention, they have to go a little higher. Because anger has lights up the same parts of your brain as pornography. It becomes addictive. They addict you to anger and they keep moving you up the ladder, or down into the hole as I call it. Yeah. And so that's where that all came from. That's very relevant, I think to the world we live in not just the whole world. And not just now but throughout history. How how people get pulled to places, they, they would never be that person that would never have been that person 10 years earlier.

Hudson 38:35

Yeah. And that's something I think we're seeing over and over again. I mean, I even know my own family and friends. There's people that I never thought would get to where they are, but they are, um, you know, and I think one of the things that really struck me about *relentless* is like so I have a couple of like timing questions. So when did you finish the manuscript for *relentless*?

Bob 38:57

Oh, probably about A year ago, maybe?

Maybe the fall last year. Now let's just copy that stuff.

Hudson 39:10

I mean, and I'm sure you've seen it from *Wizards of the Coast*, but I wanted to just briefly read one part of their statement they issued said, throughout the 50 year history of d&d, some of the peoples in the game orcs and drough have been two of the prime examples have been characterized as monsters and evil, using descriptions that are painfully reminiscent of how real world ethnic groups have been and continue to be denigrated. And then they go on to say how they're changing some things. And I don't I *relentless* could not be more timely, and I know isn't that weird? unbeliev I read that and I'm like, there's no fucking way that this is written like a year ago, like no,

Bob 39:46



it was actually four years ago when that was all plotted and relentless, and I started this path with the companions. And I'll tell you why. First of all, you you've read all my books, you know them Probably better than I do at this point, very unreliable and forgetting everything. I defy you to show me a place in my books, where the omniscient narrator calls the drought evil, or where the drought are more evil than the other races I portray.

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