

Living next door to a crack dealer

DD Ruby had to step over the drug addicts outside her home. She talks to **George Nott** about how she's used these experiences in a novel

BOOK

IT'S not the ideal environment in which to write a novel. And an even worse place to live and raise a child. "There was constant noise, you're constantly being woken by bells ringing at all hours, or your own doorbell when it's not meant for you. You're living on small amounts of sleep and under the constant threat of violence.

"People urinated in the corridor, you'd come across people using drugs, strung out, and you'd find crack pipes in the corridor. It's very exhausting to deal with."

Author DD Ruby (a pseudonym used to protect her anonymity) suffered for years living next door to a crack house in Tottenham. While fighting for help from the local authorities, it was in these dire circumstances that the mother-of-two penned *Block*, her debut sci-fi crime novel.

"It was a long road to get results," she explains. "Sometimes it felt as if we were the criminals. Too long. A lot of it came from frustration."

The book is a gritty portrayal of a life lived in fear: protagonist Murella and long-term sidekick Cas must dodge the dealer on the doorstep to take the children to school too.

"We've had many books dealing with the idea of being an addict," says the 37-year-old, "and books about being a dealer, but not much about what it's like to be living in between, to be in a community affected by this kind of activity."

"A lot of creative work almost glamorises this kind of world. There's nothing glamorous about it."

While Murella and Cas struggle to survive, two scientists and a politician believe they have found a solution.

The uncompromising Davenport is feeling frustrated by professional constraints, while Monroe, his downtrodden junior, is fast becoming bored of playing Robin to his Batman. When a self-serving individual with radical views on social reform steps in, things take an unexpected turn.

This science element is drawn from the author's background in medicine, having

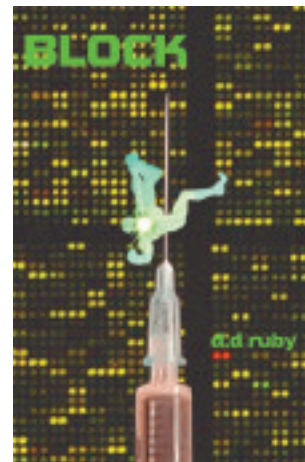
graduated from medical school and worked as a health columnist.

"I've been around scientists for a large part of my life," she explains. "I became interested in the scientific mind, the characteristics, the common motivations. The competitive nature of research is really interesting – what drives the will to succeed and what happens when that supersedes everything else causing brilliance to spill over into corruption."

The ambitious book looks at power and the powerless, crime and corruption, with elements drawn from superhero comics – 'a story of dual identities where everyone's limits are being tested'.

"I don't want to say too much," says the author, "but let's say there's 'unlawful modification of individuals' that's going on."

It's an intriguing phrase that only reading the book can truly explain.



"There's an element of are we going too far, are scientists playing god? Sometimes when you change things there's no way of going back."

Although she won't go so far as saying the novel will leave readers feeling uplifted, the author, who now lives happily free from her former neighbours, says there are positives to take from it.

"I hope people will feel motivated to make a change. It's a story that needs to be told. It's not just my story but the story of many people who live in deprived areas. I hope I've given a voice to the

voiceless.

"You can endure, you can go on. You can exist and go on living, no matter what happens. You can come through to the end of something no matter how bad."

● *Block* by DD Ruby is available in paperback on amazon.co.uk and as an e-book on Kindle and iTunes. Details: www.ddruby.co.uk

Free Confidential Advice Service.

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at the Dugdale Centre, 39 London Road, Enfield EN2 6DS
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Community of Christ,
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ADMISSIONS - ENTRY 2013 Opportunities to visit the school

Prospective students and parents are warmly invited to the following events:

Open Afternoon - Thursday 19th July 2012 - 2 pm - 5 pm

This is your **only** opportunity to walk around and gain a feel for life at Dame Alice Owen's School, view samples of our work, take part in activities and meet students and staff. There will also be the opportunity to hear the Head teacher speak.

School Tours - Tuesday 2nd - Friday 5th October 2012

If you wish to visit the school during a normal working day, limited tours will take place at **9:30 am only**.

Booking is not required at any of these events. Admissions information and practice papers will be available on all occasions. **Please park with due consideration for our neighbours.**

Under the Governors' Admissions Arrangements, 65 of the 200 available places will be offered according to ability, as determined by the Governors' Entrance Examination which is in two parts. Part 1 (Verbal Reasoning) will take place on **Monday 3rd September** and Part 2 (English and Mathematics) on **Saturday 8th September**. There will be a further 10 places for applicants demonstrating aptitude in Music. Musical Aptitude tests will take place on **Tuesday 4th September**.

If you wish your child to take our Entrance Examination or Music Aptitude test you will need to complete a Test Application Form (TAF) which is available from the school, from the school website, or by post. The TAF must be returned to the school by **22nd June 2012**. To receive a prospectus and admissions information by post, please send a self addressed label and stamps to the value of £1.46 to:

**The Admissions Officer
Dame Alice Owen's School
Dugdale Hill Lane, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 2DU**

Completion of the TAF is an application to sit the tests only and does not constitute an application for a place at the school. To be considered for a place at Dame Alice Owen's School you must include it as one of your preferences when you submit your home Local Authority Common Application Form.

Please refer to the Admissions Section of the School website for further details and up to date information.
www.damealiceowens.herts.sch.uk