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86'd

THE SAVAGE KICK #6

**a literary magazine by
Murder Slim Press**

Savage Kick Talks To Dan Fante: 29/04/2012

Savage Kick: *86'D dealt with Bruno Dante hitting rock bottom and turning to AA. Was the intention to kill off your Dante alter-ego? How did that feel? Was it finally good to get Dante out of your system, especially given your own long-standing sobriety?*

Dan Fante: When I got to the end of 86'D I had the thought that I was done with Bruno Dante. That thought persisted for quite some time. Then recently I was in France on a book tour and someone asked me, 'So, is 86'D this the end of Bruno Dante? To my surprise I answered, "I don't think so."

SK: *If it does happen, how will you revisit Bruno?*

DF: There's something more about Bruno - something else that needs to be said. Bruno is struggling to fit in - to be another guy on the street but he's just a bit too stubborn and reckless for that role.

SK: *At the end of 86'D, Bruno has a change of heart about AA and is approaching recovery through that route. To what extent did AA*

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and religion have in your own recovery?

DF: I wrote my novel CHUMP CHANGE in a long depression where I frequently decided to kill myself. Were it not for the 12 Steps I'm sure I'd be dead.

SK: *How do you look back on MOOCH and CHUMP CHANGE? They're two of our all-time favourite books at Murder Slim Press due to their directness. What mentality did you have when you wrote the books? How long had you been sober?*

DF: I was quite nuts when I wrote CHUMP CHANGE. Writing the book was done to save my sanity at the time. So CHUMP CHANGE figured strongly in me surviving my own madness. MOOCH was motivated by my second favorite obsession other than myself: women. I'd been jilted a few years before by one of the sexiest women I'd ever met and I wrote the book to get past the aftertaste.

SK: *FANTE covers your complex relationship with your father. The book covers a lot of conflict... but what was the best side about John Fante, outside of his writing skill?*

DF: Pop was an a true raconteur and a very charming guy - when he wanted to be. He was also brilliant and deadly at observing the weaknesses in others. He had an amazing bullshit sniffer. He was one of those people who, after you have met them, you never forget the meeting.

SK: *And what has been the worst aspect of being John Fante's*

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son?

DF: That's easy. We have five generations of alxies in our lineage. Some families have blue eyes - ours has Johnny Walker bottles piled on the back porch.

SK: *We're guessing that you're the son character in WEST OF ROME's superb "My Dog Stupid." How did you feel about your representation in the book when it was released?*

DF: I felt like he missed the boat. My dad really had a blank spot where his kids were concerned. He wasn't a sensitive dad and he didn't assess his children's needs or their personalities well.

SK: *As with your father, success in France and the UK seemed to re-ignite success for you. What is different about audiences here in Europe?*

DF: *The essential thing about British and European audiences is that they still read. People over your way still enjoy literary fiction. It's been dead and buried in the US for five years now. No requiem either. It was just dumped at the curb in front of the publishing houses on the East Side of New York - like the rotting carcass of an unloved cat.*

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