

# Island author creates Hong Kong fiction

**HONG KONG** — In a new novel *High Degree Of Atrocity*, ex-journalist Jay Scott Kanes attempts to deal candidly through English-language fiction with Hong Kong's divisive political future.

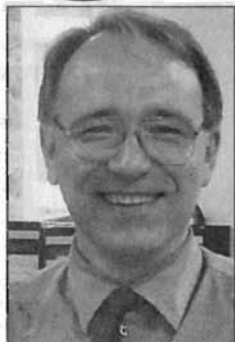
Residents of Hong Kong simmer and fret, trapped between their yearnings for political freedom and the Beijing leadership's intolerance. "High Degree Of Atrocity's plot emerges from real-life political turmoil," says Kanes in a news release.

"The fictional events reflect reality, albeit a worst-case scenario."

In the summer of 2009, "as angry citizens march for democracy, two twitches on the trigger of a handgun leave a pair of important people sprawled lifeless on the sidewalk," notes the release. "Gunshots disrupt a street protest in Hong Kong and unleash tragedy on a towering scale."

Jay Scott Kanes serves as a pen name for John Cairns, originally from Lower Freetown, P.E.I. Cairns graduated from Athena high school in 1976 and the University of Prince Edward Island in 1980. His journalism career began with *The Sault Star* newspaper in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario, and then *The Leader-Post* in Regina, Sask.

Links to Asia developed fast after Kanes first visited the region in 1986, notes the release. "Moving from big-



Jay Scott Kanes  
(John Cairns)

sky country on the Canadian prairies to the skyscraper-canyons in Hong Kong caused significant lifestyle changes," Kanes said. "Instead of gnawing on beef steaks, I began to slurp soup noodles."

"Initially, I edited a magazine called *Arts of Asia*," Kanes said. Later, he supervised editorial contents for business titles like *Hong Kong Trade Services*, *Hong Kong Electronics* and *Hong Kong Jewellery Collection*.

During Hong Kong's difficult 1997 transformation from a British colony into a Chinese special administrative region, Kanes worked as an insider in Hong Kong's government sector.

"Among other tasks, I prepared promotional prose for overseas distribution by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council," said Kanes.

"By writing this book, I attempt to protect Hong Kong from prospects the plot may come true. Maybe explosive fiction can repel sinister forces to the north that consistently threaten Hong Kong's autonomy and freedoms."

"My earliest inspiration came 15 years ago," Kanes said.

"The Beijing Massacre, when innocent students died at the hands of People's Liberation Army soldiers on June 4, 1989, ranks as the most shock-

ing news event of my lifetime. The Chinese government's refusal to acknowledge tragic injustices on that deadly day reflects the national leadership's persistent shortcomings. Hong Kong people legitimately fear more atrocities."

Amid the chaos in the novel, democracy campaigner Elsie Chan-Barrett and her husband Blair must struggle to survive while keeping alive an entire city's flickering hopes for a better future.

Their leading adversaries, Chinese president Teng Jiheng, his Hong Kong director Yang Fengfu and PLA major-general Zhang Bingde, rank among Asia's most powerful people.

## HIGH DEGREE OF ATROCITY

Jay Scott Kanes



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