

AUTHORS AT THE SHOW

Dean Koontz

Odds and Ends

Dean Koontz says he was never interested in writing a series, but Odd Thomas, the popular protagonist of three bestsellers and now *Odd Hours* (Bantam, May), won't let him stop. "Odd totally tells his own stories," says Koontz. "It is almost like dictation, and eerie in a way."

Odd, the humble but resourceful fry cook from Pico Mundo, Calif., who sees restless spirits and is compelled to help them, is a hit with readers and his creator. "I enjoy him enormously. Every day I sit down to write about Odd is a joy," Koontz tells *Show Daily*. It is easy to see why: Odd is an unassuming hero who seeks no fame. He maintains a quirky sense of humor even when battling the darkest villains of this world or the realm of the spirits. His savvy set of ghostly sidekicks, including Elvis Presley and Frank Sinatra, add spice to the series, which Koontz says may reach seven books.

In *Odd Hours*, Koontz has upped the ante for Odd by creating a James Bond-style action/adventure, complete with terrorists and the threat of nuclear disaster. Though challenged as never before, Odd remains creative under fire, and in one inspired escape sequence enlists the spectral help of a furious Frank Sinatra. "You can imagine how much fun that scene was to write," says Koontz, adding that Odd has always stretched him as a writer.

Koontz makes no secret of the fact that he is troubled by today's celebrity culture, and with this series is "writing an argument that the true value in society is from people who have humility, perseverance and a sense of proportion in life, and not from fame. There are so many people doing wonderful work, and you almost never hear anything about them," says Koontz, who is pleased Odd resonates so well with younger readers. "He stands for quite the opposite of what the media sells them every day."

Today, Koontz will be appearing with Michael Connelly in a new BEA forum called "Meet the Bestsellers," noon-2 p.m. in Room 403AB. Both will be interviewed onstage by Carol Memmott, *USA Today* book critic, followed by a q&a and an autograph signing with no time limit. Having taken a break from personal appearances in recent years, Koontz says he is looking forward to the event. "This is a book crowd, so you know the q&a will be interesting. You won't have to pry questions out of the audience."

After finishing at "Meet the Bestsellers," Koontz will sign at the Brilliance Audio booth, 1867.

—Karen Jones

