

STYLE



Brevard author S. Jennifer Paulson holds an advance copy of her debut novel, a domestic thriller titled "Boomerang" set for release March 19.
TIM SHORTT/
FLORIDA TODAY

'THE GUTS TO GO FOR IT':

ROCKLEDGE WOMAN'S FIRST NOVEL SET FOR RELEASE

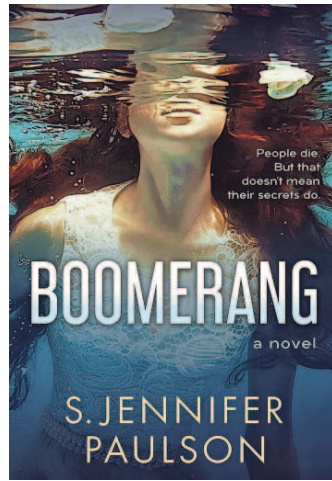
Michelle Spitzer Florida Today | USA TODAY NETWORK - FLORIDA

Rockledge mom Sara Paulson said she was a writer before she knew it. ● Case in point: her first book, written at the age of 5. Paulson described "The Rabbit," as "pretty disturbing for a little kid." But she said her English teacher mom didn't blink and encouraged the young girl's creativity. ● That set Paulson on a track where writing became a passion and psychological thrillers were her genre. Years after penning "The Rabbit," Paulson's first novel, "Boomerang," will be published Tuesday — her 49th birthday. ● "I couldn't think of a better gift," said Paulson, who writes under the name S. Jennifer Paulson. "That way, I will always remember it took me 49 years to have the guts to finally go for it."

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Brevard author S. Jennifer Paulson is releasing her debut novel, a domestic thriller, titled “Boomerang,” on March 19. Part of her grassroots marketing campaign strategy is leaving rubber ducks on Jeeps, along with her business card and QR code for her website. TIM SHORTT/ FLORIDA TODAY



Sara Paulson's new novel “Boomerang” will be released March 19, the author's 49th birthday. SARA PAULSON



Brevard author S. Jennifer Paulson is releasing her debut novel, a domestic thriller titled “Boomerang,” on March 19. Much of her writing is done while set up on her laptop at Tyeds Teahouse in Cocoa, which is a kava, botanical, herbal tea and coffee place. TIM SHORTT/ FLORIDA TODAY

Paulson

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‘Boomerang’: What’s it about?

“Boomerang” is about a young journalist whose husband suddenly dies. She then discovers a dark secret from her husband’s past, which catapults the story into a surprising direction with various unexpected twists and turns.

Paulson questioned if the book was too dark.

“I even thought about yanking the whole thing, but then I flipped on Max and started watching “True Detective,” Paulson said.

“Within the first five minutes, I had my answer — there are a lot of dark stories out there. Not just ‘Boomerang,’ and they’re dark because, unfortunately, sometimes our world is, too, despite its beauty.”

The book was partially inspired by the #MeToo movement, a social media campaign that draws awareness to sexual abuse, sexual harassment and rape culture. Paulson also drew on personal experiences she had as a self-described alcohol abuser.

“While I don’t like to label myself, I am proud to say I have been alcohol-free since April 26, 2020,” she said.

“While this is extremely personal and vulnerable to share my own journey, my hope is that if one person sees this and it compels them to make a change in their life, sharing my story will be worth it.”

Career played a role in the process

Paulson grew up in Chicago and attending the University of Illinois at Chicago, where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in English. In 1999 she joined the staff at FLORIDA TODAY as a general assignment reporter.

She spent the next 17 years at the paper in various roles, from features reporter to parenting columnist to editor for Space Coast Parent Magazine. After leaving FLORIDA TODAY in 2016, she spent seven years in health care communications.

The concept for the book “Boomerang” remained in the back of her head throughout her career. By April 2020, Paulson’s two children were teenagers, her head was clear from not drinking and she was ready to take novel writing seriously.

While none of the characters and stories in the book are based on true events, Paulson was inspired by articles she covered. One in particular was a case leading up to the execution of a man convicted of sexually assaulting

and killing a woman in the Chicago area. Through her work, she bonded with the victim’s mom.

“I’ll never forget her or the pain I could see in her eyes whenever she spoke of her daughter’s murder,” Paulson recalled.

“Stuff like that gets my mind going. I’m also a news junkie. And just in casual conversation with dozens of other women, I felt I had a somewhat unique angle I don’t think I’ve seen before.”

A writer for life

Paulson will have a book release party Tuesday from 5 pm to 8 pm at Tyed’s Teahouse, which is where most of “Boomerang” was written.

Her first novel may be hitting bookshelves, but the writing will continue.

Paulson said she has a notebook filled with ideas, and despite navigating the world of self-publishing and some hiccups along the way, she’s not stopping anytime soon, saying she’ll write until she dies.

“I was determined I would finish this book, no matter what. I even kept a thumb drive of its updates over the years, and told my husband that if something happened to me, please still make sure ‘Boomerang gets published,” she said.

“The first time I held my own book’s paperback copy in my hands, I couldn’t believe it. I wrote this? I just hope readers enjoy reading the story as much as I did writing it.”

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