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Mind The Gap: And 2 Other Mysteries

Jared Brown

Illinois Wesleyan University

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First Mystery by Emeritus Professor Published

May 21, 2009

BLOOMINGTON, Ill. – Illinois Wesleyan University Professor Emeritus of Theatre Jared Brown has published his first mystery novel, *Mind the Gap and 2 Other Mysteries* (Author House, 2009).

Mind the Gap follows the 17-day trip of American theater students in London. Brown, a professor of theatre at Illinois Wesleyan from 1989 to 2001, is a prolific writer of plays and biographies. Published this month, *Mind the Gap* is Brown's sixth book, but first foray into fiction. Since 1986, he has created five biographies and histories of famous Broadway actors and directors, such as *The Fabulous Lunts: A Biography of Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne* (Atheneum, 1986), *Zero Mostel: A Biography* (Atheneum, 1989) and *Alan J. Pakula: His Films and His Life* (Back Stage Books, 2005).



Professor Emeritus of Theatre
Jared Brown

Working on fiction was a new challenge, said Brown, who is used to conducting interviews to research his biographies. "When I was interviewing, I could always think, 'How does what he told me fit in with what she told me?'" In a way, I was writing the book in my mind even before I sat down to put it on paper," said Brown, who has interviewed such people as Harrison Ford, Robert Redford, Meryl Streep, Kevin Kline and Peter Jennings for his books. "When I started with fiction, I started with just a blank screen staring at me, which was a touch overwhelming," he admitted.



Once he completed the first story, Brown said other stories flowed with much more ease. Two of those stories are included in *Mind the Gap*. The first, "The Value of Books," follows a librarian in love with a co-worker, who plots to get rid of his romantic rival. The second, "Midtown Detectives," Brown calls a spoof of the noir mysteries of Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and Robert B. Parker. "There was a time when I would read two or three mysteries a week," said Brown of his love for the noir work.

Mind the Gap has further Illinois Wesleyan connections. The cover art was created by 2009 graduate Matt Young of Madison, Wis. "I asked [Professor of Art] Sherri McElroy if she had any outstanding students in her graphic design class who might want to design the cover," said Brown. "She offered Matt." The cover is a darkly blurred shot of the London

Underground, a setting of one of the book's crimes.

Along with his books, Brown is the author of several plays. His next project will be the production of three of his one-act plays at the Heartland Theatre Company in Normal, Ill. The performance called *Three for the Show* is slated to open in the fall of 2010.

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