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An advertisement for Shelter Insurance. On the left is the Shelter Insurance logo, which consists of a blue shield with a white border and a red base, containing the words "SHELTER INSURANCE" in white. To the right of the logo are three headshots of insurance agents: Sarah Duffer, Dan McCloud, and Nancy Hickey. Below each headshot is their name. To the right of the headshots is a blue text box with white text that reads: "Let us help you get the right coverage at the best rate possible & help you shrink your auto premium!". At the bottom right of the advertisement, there is a black text box with white text that reads: "Click here to visit our Bowling Green agent's websites.".

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Comedic author dazzles WKU students

By CAROLINE EGGERS ceggers@bgdailynews.com 7 min ago



Relaxed and waggish, New York Times best-selling author Andrew Shaffer met with several dozen students, professors and others Tuesday at Western Kentucky University to discuss his latest novel about a Washington power couple.

“Hope Never Dies: An Obama Biden Mystery” teams former President Barack Obama and Vice President Joe Biden for a journey through Delaware’s cheap motels and biker bars to unravel a murder mystery – learning about America’s opioid epidemic and rekindling their flame along the way.

The final week of the Obama-Biden administration inspired the bromantic noir. Shaffer scrolled through memes of Biden playing pranks on the 44th president and had the thought, “I could turn this into a book,” and “it’s going to kick ass.”

It begins with Biden, who is bored with domesticity and pining for someone tall, dark and handsome – Obama, who’s been kayaking, windsurfing and BASE jumping with celebrities since leaving the Oval Office.

The latter more or less did happen. “(Obama) just had the biggest smile on his face,” Shaffer said. “People would say what about Michelle and the kids, and I’m like, ‘What about Joe?’ ”

Shaffer opted not to read the first chapter to reel unread guests into the story. Instead, he selected an unpublished chapter in which Biden finds Obama walking on the beach the morning after discovering a clue.

“Barack had changed from his navy suit into a pair of khaki shorts and a slim black polo, the armholes of which were stretched out by his magnificent biceps. Unlike your Uncle Joe, the president had been working out,” Shaffer read, voicing Biden’s demotic narrative with moderately believable accuracy.

“Nobody knew we had escaped the Secret Service and were on the lam. Nobody knew we were on the trail of a killer.”

The audience returned uproarious laughter throughout the brief presentation – even from a few guests that initially raised eyebrows at his sometimes unconventional humor.

Following the reading, they probed the raconteur for details about the publishing world, the politicians and how his cat, Honeytoast, was doing.

Shaffer offered a few words of advice on pursuing writing careers – namely, that it takes time to become a writer. After completing his undergraduate degree in English at the University of Iowa, it took at least a decade to publish his first work.

“It takes a lot of time to build up those writing muscles,” Shaffer said.

Tara Shade, a WKU student, lined up with a couple dozen other attendees to get her new book signed.

“I thought it was amazing,” Shade said of Shaffer’s presentation. “I’m really excited about the book.”

Kelly and Devin Burton, who had actually read the book, drove from Somerset to meet Shaffer.

“He’s awesome,” Devin Burton said. “He seemed pretty much what I expected ... a pretty cool, laid-back guy.”

“We follow him on Instagram and Twitter and stuff, so we kind of knew what he was like,” Kelly Burton said. “We were excited to be here though.”

“We can’t wait for the sequel,” Devin Burton said.

Shaffer is working on a second Obama-Biden mystery, titled “Hope Rides Again.”

“That’s going to be a fun book,” Shaffer said.

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