

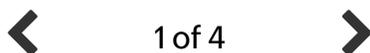
MIAMI BOOK FAIR INT'L NOVEMBER 18, 2015

Tom Brokaw: Take control of your life as a cancer patient

HIGHLIGHTS

The former NBC Nightly News anchor said being treated for multiple myeloma has been 'humbling.'

Marlon James talked about his novel, "A Brief History of Seven Killings," which revolved around Bob Marley



BY CONNIE OGLE
cogle@miamiherald.com

Novelist Marlon James and journalist Tom Brokaw took audiences on two very different journeys Wednesday at Miami Book Fair.

As the fair crept toward its midway point, James — the first Man Booker Prize winner from Jamaica — invited audiences into the minds of a couple of the myriad characters in his novel, *A Brief History of Seven Killings* (a misnomer, he confessed — there are actually more than seven killings). The book, which started as a crime novella, grew to be an epic story about Jamaica, the Cold War and gang warfare, all swirling around the man everyone calls The Singer — reggae superstar Bob Marley.

“In order to write it, I had to let go of everything that I thought good writing was,” said James, who was introduced by the Miami Foundation’s Marlon Hill, a Miami attorney.

He read one funny chapter in full Jamaican patois and one that is “really, really salacious” (it was — and no, I’m not going to tell you what it was about).

He admitted the book had the ability to take him by surprise as he was writing it. He hadn’t expected so much of the story to be about the Cold War, for example.

“It’s the book I had the least control over,” he said. “It was almost as if the people turned into real people, and I turned into a journalist.”

Brokaw, the real journalist of the evening, talked about his new memoir, *A Lucky Life Interrupted*, about his diagnosis and treatment of multiple myeloma. Introduced by Marc Buoniconti, president of the Miami Project to Cure Paralysis — who drew applause when he announced Brokaw was in remission — the former *NBC Nightly News* anchor joked, “If there’s an oxymoron in life, it’s ‘humble anchorman,’ but this has been a humbling experience for me.”

Brokaw talked about getting the diagnosis — he thought he had hurt his back — and how once he became a cancer patient he “got to know the American hospital system from the ground up,” he said, adding that he learned one thing that everyone learns in his position: “The real angels are the nurses and the orderlies.”

He hopes the book, which he started work on once he was diagnosed, helps other cancer patients navigate the pitfalls of the disease. “It’s about how to take control of your life if you’re a cancer patient.”

There is, he said, room for optimism in treatments — and about life.

“We’re on the cusp of a golden age in cancer treatment,” he said, adding that he still believes he’s had a lucky life.

THURSDAY AT THE FAIR

6 p.m.: “An Evening With Gary Snyder,” Chapman Conference Center, Miami Dade College, 300 NE Second Ave., Miami; \$15; www.miamibookfair.com

8 p.m.: “An Evening With David Axelrod,” Chapman; \$15.

At The Swamp: 6 p.m.: Miami Against Humanity with The New Tropic; 7:30 p.m., The Moth StorySlam



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