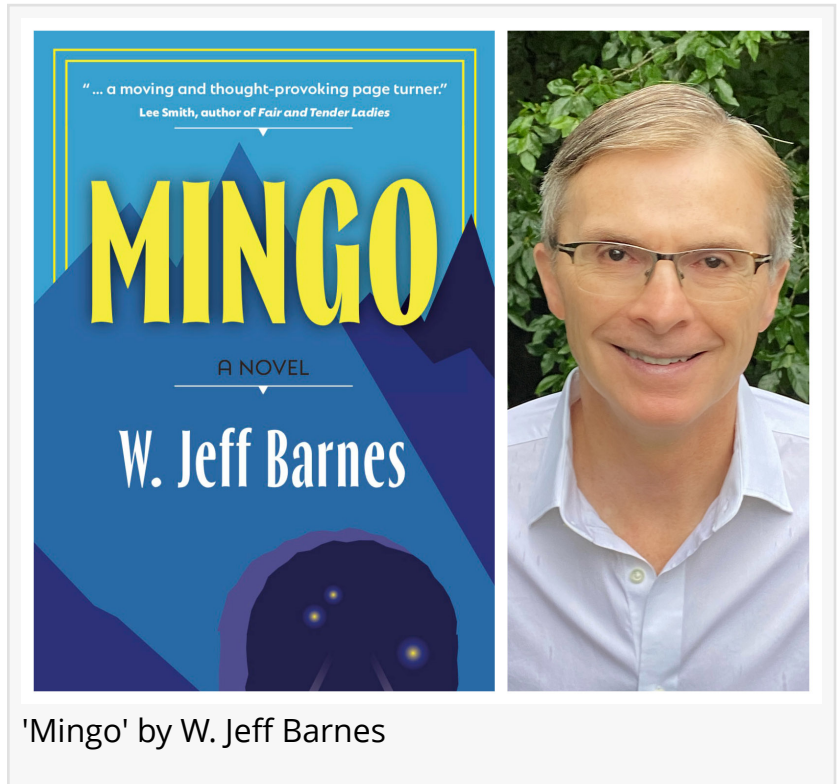


# AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR W. JEFF BARNES SIGNS WITH ALLEN MEDIA STRATEGIES FOR REPRESENTATION

*~Barnes's Novel "Mingo" Shines A Spotlight on the Little-Known West Virginia Coal Wars and the Battle of Blair Mountain~*

WASHINGTON, DC, UNITED STATES, February 27, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Allen Media Strategies](#) is proud to announce the signing of novelist [W. Jeff Barnes](#) to their roster of best-selling authors, entertainers, and subject matter experts.

Barnes's debut novel "Mingo" was recently named the 2022 Readers Favorite International Book Contest Gold Medal Winner for Southern Fiction and has received dozens of five-star reviews.



'Mingo' by W. Jeff Barnes

"We're beyond excited to help bring Jeff's book to a wider audience," said Allen Media Strategies CEO and Director of Fun Burke Allen. "I grew up just a few miles from where the story that serves as the basis for Mingo took place, so I have a real personal interest in helping make sure this significant event in American history finally gets the historical recognition it deserves."

I've heard it said that "if you want to learn history, read a history text. If you want to learn history, read historical fiction." My goal in writing "Mingo" was to do just that: expose readers to an important piece of American history they likely know nothing about in a compelling and entertaining way. For that reason, I'm excited to partner with Allen Media Strategies as we introduce "Mingo" and the history of the West Virginia mine wars to readers everywhere.

A thrilling work of historical fiction, Mingo (Little Star Books) is set against the backdrop of the coal-rich, hard-scrabble breakaway state of West Virginia and the more "civilized," segregated Virginia. The novel pits brother against brother amidst the deadly struggle to unionize America's coalfields in the early 1920s, weaving together authentic true-to-life fictional characters with real



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*Author W. Jeff Barnes*

people and situations from the era. Mingo paints a rich and textured narrative tapestry that is so compelling, readers are often surprised to learn that the bloody battle the story is based around actually happened.

Mingo (named for one of the southernmost counties in the West Virginia coalfields) highlights/brings to life the almost-forgotten Battle of Blair Mountain, the largest labor uprising in United States history, and the deadliest armed uprising since the Civil War. The battle at the center of the West Virginia Coal Wars arose between miners and mine

operators over the right to unionize and improve their often-deadly working conditions and low wages (which frequently were paid not with real currency, but instead with 'scrip', which was redeemable only at company-owned stores). In August of 1921, thousands of miners, dubbed "rednecks" because of the red bandanas they tied around their necks, marched to Blair Mountain in Logan County in an attempt to free their fellow union members from the Logan County jail.

Risking a war with his own citizens, President Harding sent the U.S. Army to suppress the armed uprising. The deadly battle lasted for several days, resulting in an unknown number of casualties, and helped pave the way for safer conditions for miners and future labor rights movements.

David L. Robbins, the New York Times bestselling author of War of the Rats and Isaac's Beacon says that "Mingo is like the mining of coal itself, explosive and powerful, darkness emerging into light. Barnes has found a rich seam." Kelly Corrigan, the New York Times bestselling author of The Middle Place and Glitter and Glue calls Mingo "An unforgettable coming of age story that sets brother against brother in the 20th-century coal wars. Jeff Barnes is a natural storyteller."

"Mingo" is available now at all major bookstores, independent booksellers, and online retailers. For more information about the book or to schedule an interview or book signing appearance with author W. Jeff Barnes, please contact Allen Media Strategies Shaili Priya at (703) 589-8960 or [shaili@allenmediastrategies.com](mailto:shaili@allenmediastrategies.com).

#### About the Author:

W. Jeff Barnes was born and raised in Tazewell, Virginia, in the heart of southern Virginia's coalfields, and just across the state line from West Virginia. "Mingo" was inspired by his fascination with the Battle of Matewan (the pre-cursor to the Battle of Blair Mountain and the subject of the critically acclaimed John Sayles film Matewan starring James Earl Jones and Chris Cooper) and also by the many years his father spent mining coal. Jeff graduated from the College of William and Mary with undergraduate and law degrees. He lives and practices law in Richmond, Virginia. "Mingo" is his first novel.

## About the Book:

In his debut novel *Mingo*, author W. Jeff Barnes reveals the deep divide between corporate might and those who are willing to fight and risk their lives to earn a fair wage for an honest day's work.

The young Matney brothers are tragically fated to divergent paths: fourteen-year-old Bascom to the coal mines with his father, and younger Durwood to the care of distant family in far-off Richmond. Bascom is resolved to a life underground as a coal miner, but dreams of escape and a reunion with his brother; Durwood thrives in a life cushioned by wealth in Richmond but is disciplined by the promise of returning home as soon as things "settle down."

It's not long before the Matney brothers find themselves separated by more than the Appalachian Mountains, when outspoken labor organizer Mother Jones, "the most dangerous woman in America," begins stirring up the coalfields with ideas about the collective good. Shaped by different circumstances and the passage of time, the brothers reunite only to find themselves on opposite sides of the bloody conflict, one pitting coal miners and their families against the notorious Baldwin-Felts armed thugs, and tragically, brother against brother.

Thoughtfully researched, beautifully written, and culminating in the historic Battle of Blair Mountain in the summer of 1921, *Mingo* delivers unforgettable characters while exploring themes of class struggle and racial division that continue to roil America.

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