

Between The Lines

# Novelist's debut the stuff of dreams

**S**OME people say dreams are omens, others contend they are catalysts for change, while cynics consider them merely a convenient dumping ground for all the useless images that bombard us in daily life.

Paul McCartney apparently dreamt the complete music and lyrics of *Yesterday*.

Nostradamus went into a dream-state to uncover the events that fuelled his prophecies.

As for Australian writer PD Martin – the P is for Phillipa – she dreamt that all her mates were being murdered by a serial killer and her own life was in danger. The next day she received the tragic news that one of her friends had committed suicide. Eight years later the result of that nightmarish time is *Body Count* (Macmillan, \$30), a novel turning out to be a dream debut for PD Martin.

"In my nightmare I was investigating each murder and I'd wake up immediately after each body was discovered. When I went back to sleep the dream continued exactly where I left off," says Martin. "When I woke up for the final time that night, it was after I had been cornered by the killer.

"I don't suppose it's the most

conventional way to start out as a novelist." Maybe not, but *Body Count* benefits from being such an unconventional story.

It is set in Washington DC where a killer is on the loose and Australian FBI profiler Sophie Anderson is on the case.

Sophie suspects the killing has just begun and with her fellow agents delves into the mind of the murderer and tries to predict his next move.

When another victim is discovered, Sophie knows she's seen the girl before – in her dreams.

As she struggles to separate the real and unreal, the body count climbs until it's Sophie's own life in peril.

An avid reader from childhood, PD Martin advanced from *Famous Five* adventures and *Nancy Drew* mysteries to Agatha Christie.

She wrote her first mystery novella in Year 5.

"I was probably too young to be reading Agatha Christie, but maybe I can thank her for some of the crazy dreams I have," Martin said.

Martin went on to study psychology, criminology and creative writing, but after the rejection slips began to pile up from

reluctant publishers she began to doubt herself.

"I seriously thought about giving up, but I still had way too many ideas and so I decided to write one more book. The result was *Body Count*."

Martin is currently working on her second novel, *The Murderer's Club*, which does not feature Sophie Anderson.

However, she does plan to revisit the character in future.

