

'Blunder' hands out life lessons

BY MICHAEL MARA
CORRESPONDENT

Everyone has a bad day at work now and then. Most people are able to shake it off and move on; others aren't so lucky. If the stress continues to build day after day, some come to a breaking point, a moment where their whole world seems to crash down around them.

This is certainly the case with Brice Lanning, the main character in Joe Kilgore's novel "The Blunder." After being taken off a prestigious project at the advertising agency for whom he has for more than 30 years, Lanning decides he has had enough.

Well, actually it takes a couple of hours and way too many martinis for him to reach that conclusion. Thanks to the excess of alcohol and the rage building inside him, Lanning decides payback is the best way to handle the situation.

However, Lanning's ill-conceived scheme for revenge doesn't go quite as planned. Instead, it sets off a domino-effect of irreversible and unfortunate consequences. While it is easy for readers to sympathize with or even feel pity for Lanning, they also can learn from his mistakes.

Even though the book is fiction, some of the key points are so real that some readers even

may have experienced them in their own lives.

One, for example, is the younger boss/older employee situation. Lanning already feels his boss, who is at least a decade younger than him, isn't deserving of his position of power. When the boss tells Lanning he won't be needed for the big presentation with his major account, it becomes the straw that breaks the camel's back.

The book does a great job of showing how personal restraint can be in a person's best interest by providing a vivid portrait of how someone — Lanning in this case — loses control and lets his emotions take over.

According to author Joe Kilgore, the book "shows what can happen when the older employee takes matters into his own hands in all the wrong ways."

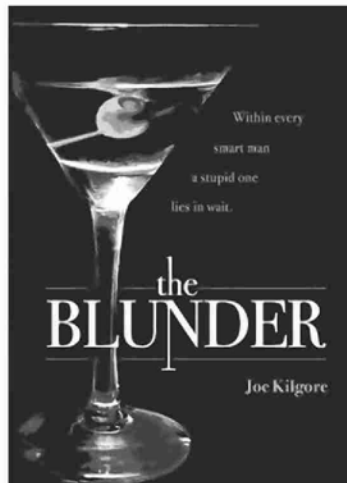
Kilgore, a part-time Chicagoan, is an advertising veteran who recently retired after 40 years to try his talents as a creative writer. This may help to explain Kilgore's source of inspiration for some of the situations Lanning finds himself in in the book.

Kilgore writes the novel as an outsider, but also allows the reader into the mind of Brice Lanning, enabling them to understand what he is thinking. This is entertaining because Lanning's fairly sarcastic in

describing his thoughts and feelings.

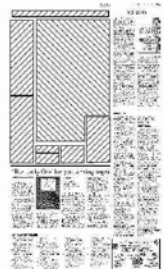
Aside from being a provocative page-turner, "The Blunder" also is a great read for anyone who enjoys laughing at the misfortunes of others. Kilgore has done well in his debut novel while simultaneously teaching readers a lesson.

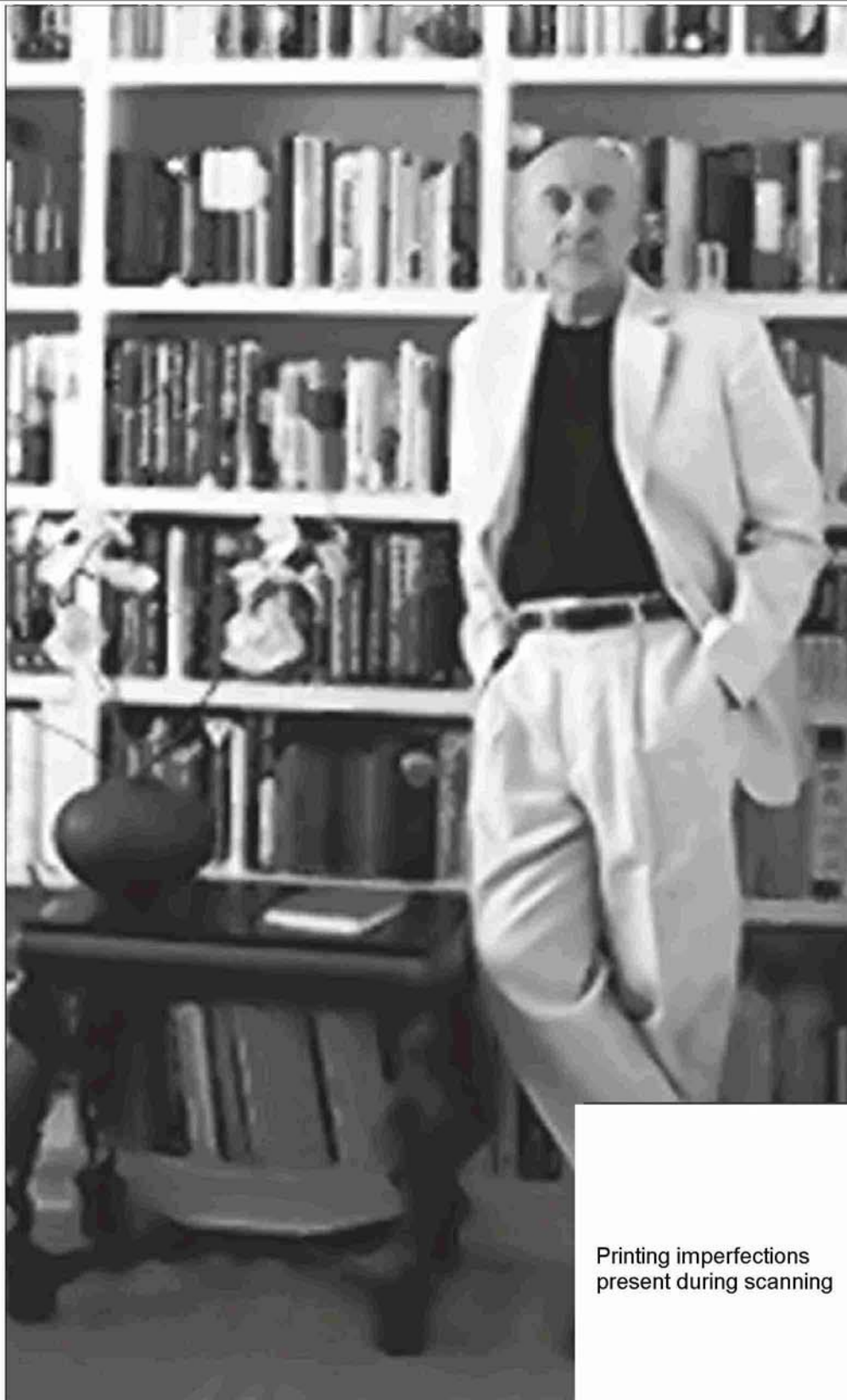
That moral being, when faced with a difficult work situation like the one Lanning encountered, use restraint. Going to the bar probably isn't a good idea, either.



READ IT

"The Blunder"
By Joe Kilgore
(\$14.95; Bridgeway Books)





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