

The Toronto Sun

SHOWCASE;
BOOKS IN BRIEF

BY YVONNE CRITTENDEN

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE NIGHT

By Martyn Burke

Martyn Burke's new novel is an unusual mix of astronomical information, illegal immigration to the U.S. and growing up in Georgian Bay.

The multi-talented author, who splits his time between Toronto and Santa Monica, has written several best-selling novels, including *Laughing War* and *Ivory Joe*, and has also written and directed award-winning films and screenplays like *The Pirates Of Silicon Valley*.

The new story centres around the giant Palomar telescope in southern California and the wonders of space, although the action is strictly earthbound.

After years on the run from arrest in Canada, a back story that develops during the present, Michael Braden is responsible for the workings of the Palomar observatory. The peace of the mountain, where the observatory is located, is marred by lawless gangs of "coyotes" who shepherd illegal immigrants from all over Latin America on their way to Los Angeles.

Braden gets caught up in a drama involving a beautiful, mysterious Cuban doctor who has escaped the wrath of a psychopathic gangster seeking retribution for the murder of his brother. As Braden tries to help the woman, he is haunted by memories of his own brother and an act of vengeance that led to his being an illegal immigrant himself. The terrestrial drama is almost overshadowed by the amazing secrets of the universe being discovered through the telescope's revelations, and the knowledge of how insignificant human life appears in contrast.

(HarperCollins)