

# TURN TO PAGE 3 ...

... in John Grisham's latest, and you'll find the mark of a Beach artist.

By Mike Kernels  
*The Virginian-Pilot*

He failed art at Old Dominion. Well, OK, technically he didn't fail. In the official version, the grade was raised to a "D," thanks to some faculty members.

In reality: "I failed painting," Lou-is Jones says with a laugh.

Why is this man smiling now? The Virginia Beach artist runs one of the most successful art galleries in the area. His paintings inspired some

imagery in the 1998 film "What Dreams May Come," and the best part: He keeps topping himself.

So there Jones was Tuesday at a Barnes & Noble in Virginia Beach, a copy of the new "Ford County" by best-selling author John Grisham in his hand, pride in his heart.

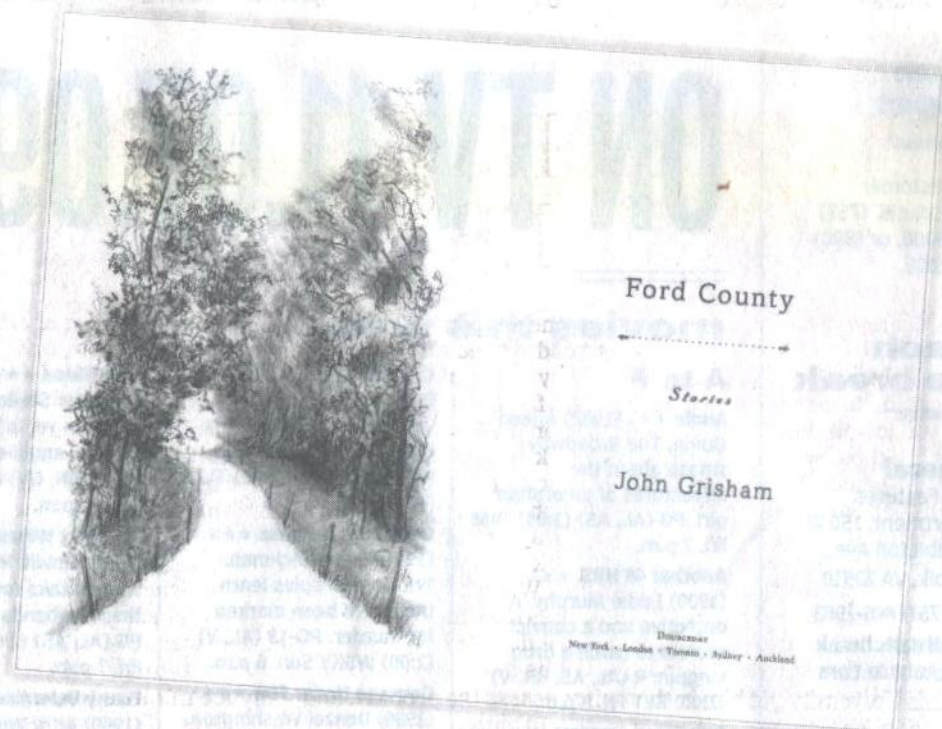
Turn to page 3. Jones did the art.

"It's cool that millions of people are going to see one of my images," said Jones, 57, the words tumbling out of his mouth like water from a brook. "I'm jazzed. It's like Christmas morning."

"Ford County," released this week,

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**thumbs up, thumbs down** John Grisham's collection, "Ford County: Stories," draws mixed reviews. **PAGE 4**



the daily break

Saturday

## ARTIST | *Va. Beach man is Grisham's go-to guy*

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is a collection of short stories set in rural Mississippi – and a rare departure from Grisham's legal thrillers.

The book also marks the third illustration Jones has done for Grisham. But how he hooked up with the literary giant, he's not sure. There were no agents, no overtures, no power lunches.

Best he can figure, he met Grisham once at the now-defunct Jones Art Gallery in Norfolk's Dominion Tower and sold himself – somehow.

"I didn't know it was him. A fellow came into the gallery, and we talked for about

an hour. He introduced himself as John. I haven't talked to him since."

Later, publishing giant Doubleday called on Grisham's behalf and offered Jones a chance to illustrate the title page for 2001's "A Painted House," another story set outside the courtroom.

"Bleachers" followed that in 2003.

Now it seems that whenever Grisham wants to write something different, he taps Jones for the art.

"It's like being part of 'Star Wars' or something. I'm humbled by it."

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