

Author Interview With Jim Shomos by **Itsy Bitsy Book Bits**

For those new to your work, please tell us a bit about yourself, your books and their genre/s

- I come from a screenwriting background and fell in love with writing novels. Up Here was my most developed screenplay and I worked on the craft of writing prose for many years before releasing it as my first novel in September 2020. I'm a ro-man-tic and enjoy exploring modern relationships through fiction.

What's Your Favorite Genre to Write?

- Romantic comedy

What lessons have you learned as a writer?

- If you're not pushing for an emotional connection, there's no point writing. Hannah Kent (Burial Rites, etc) said the key to writing was empathy. What a simple and powerful lesson. I'm a late developer in general and my writing needed me to 'grow up' a little, get out of my ego and evolve more empathy. So when 'experts' say "Write what you know", they really mean, write what you feel, what you can empathize with.

If you could spend the day with one of your characters, who would it be and what would you do?

- Christina in Up Here is a hoot. I'd love her to drive me around in her funky jeep and just hang out.

How much of yourself do you put into your books and characters?

- Everything emotionally. If I'm not emotionally drained at the end of a writing day, I've been coasting - just throwing down words. Fiction runs on a spectrum between fantasy and reality. My work tends to explore real life. So I draw on my life and people I've come across all the time.

If you won the lottery what would you do with the money?

- Invest enough that would allow me to write full time. Invest 10% in a few charities. Invest 10% in a fund to help talented and dedicated creative people. Base myself in different parts of the world for 3-4 months a year (or longer) while I'm writing.

In your everyday life how do you give back to the world?

- First in the the close relationships I'm lucky to have. I aim to be always in the moment with them and to be there whenever things are tough. I deliver meals to the elderly for Meals on Wheels one morning a week. I try and help other creative people whenever I can.

Its Release Day! How do you celebrate?

- Haigh's Chocolate. Or a chinotto with pasta at Carlucci's with my partner. Or just some quiet time at my spiritual place down by the Yara River.

If your life was a song what song would it be and why?

- A joyous, melodic pop-dance track like 'September' by Earth Wind & Fire

Name two authors you wish more people knew about

- Alli Sinclair & Juliet Madison. Great writers in their genres and two of the most positive giving people you'll ever meet.

Would you say your writing style is more character driven or plot driven?

- Plot. Story ideas come to me from some mysterious lagoon, and I have to find the characters to help me explore the theme(s).

Who are some of your favorite authors to read?

- John Le Carre, Lee Child, Nick Hornby... and it all started with Enid Blyton and the Famous Five.

What are some of your hobbies?

- Cycling, I'm a football nut (Arsenal and Melbourne Victory), songwriting (as a lyricist).

Have you attended any signings? If so, what was your favorite thing about it?

- Not yet! My first release was in the middle of the world's toughest Covid-19 lockdown in Melbourne.

When reading reviews, what is something you love to see written?

- A favorite quote or moment.

What are you currently working on?

- I'm writing this a few days before the release of Kissing Scars, so everything is marketing and crossing fingers the tech stuff all works for the retailers. But in May, I'll do my final revision on my 3rd book, More Text Than Sex, before handing it over to my editor. Aiming for July release.

What is the best writing advice you've ever received?

- Real writing is rewriting. It actually came from Ron Leigh, an early songwriting mentor. Not many geniuses out there that nail a story in one draft. Not many writers have the dedication to keep polishing... revising... improving a manuscript.

What books are currently in your to-read list?

- 34 Million Books by Valerie Parv; August Falling by Les Zig; Return to Roseglen by Helene Young.

What is your favorite book made into a movie/tv show?

- Fever Pitch (the original UK version). Book & screenplay by Nick Hornby. The book was an amazing dissection of tribal fever in sport. The Movie was a romcom with the sporting element as part of Nick's character.

You are filling out this interview as part of a tour with Itsy Bitsy Book Bits. What made you choose Itsy Bitsy Book Bits?

- They're thorough and have a good reputation for results.

What is something people would be surprised to know about you?

- I was a full time DJ in the 80s

What's the latest show you binge watched?

- French spy thriller series The Bureau. All five seasons during the crazy lockdown last year.

Which one of your characters was the hardest to develop?

- Leo in Kissing Scars... because it's inspired by a true story and Leo is based on me. So I had to change the vocation and other little things - like make him an Apple iPhone user and give him long wavy hair. I'm a Samsung dude and have a shaved head! I needed to distance myself from 'documentary me' to create a more entertaining, attractive Leo.

Which character was your favorite to write?

- Christina in Up Here - so far.

How do you keep yourself motivated through the whole writing process?

- I love every aspect of writing. Even the bad days are a million times better than doing other work. My biggest talent is discipline. That helps motivation, because there's nothing more demotivating than never finishing a story.

Does anyone read your works in progress? (Family, Friends, etc)

- I'm lucky to have a few friends and colleagues that I can trust to be honest. But I don't tend to show them anything until I've done at least two drafts, sometimes three. If I haven't done my best possible work, how can I justify asking someone to give up their precious time? Then I might do another polish before sending to my editor.

Do you ever reread books or series? If so what is a series, book Or author you could reread over and over?

- Recurring characters, yes. Like Jack Reacher. Series no.
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