

Author Interview With Christopher Alan Broadstone by Itsy Bitsy

Book Bits

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

- I'm an independent writer, filmmaker, and—in a previous incarnation—musician having toured and recorded records and CDs with my 80s new wave jazz-punk band “About 9 Times” and my 90s grunge group “The Judas Engine”. Everything I've always written, books or screenplays—even song lyrics—have leaned to the existential and dark. While my books tend to explore the poetic side of graphic violence and gore, my films are far less explicit and more cerebral. Yet both, books and films, are deeply rooted in grim philosophies and macabre realities that many find disturbing. In all cases, however, I demand thought-provoking and mind-bending stories from myself. I like to think, and I want others to think too—or certainly be inspired to do so. It's been said that my tales are “intelligent horror” or a “thinking-man's horror” and that I often ask important questions many would rather avoid. As a general rule, I don't care for labels, but I realize readers and viewers need a direction to follow, thus I have categorized everything I produce as ‘Macabre Thrillers’—because what I offer isn't simplistic common genre fare, but a much broader journey into darkness and the grand adventure it can be. As well, if I must further pigeonhole what I unleash on the world, I simply say, “If you love Edgar Allan Poe, Clive Barker, and ‘The Twilight Zone’, you'll also love my books and films.” But at the root they are just ‘Christopher Alan Broadstone stories’. On that note, I currently have four books available: “Puzzleman: A Novel”; the collection “Suicide The Hard Way: And Other Tales From The Innerzone” (short stories, screenplays, lyrics/poetry); the collection “Notes-To-Self: Accumulated Thoughts, Transferred Into Word Form” (early short stories, screenplay, lyrics/poetry); and the novella “A Catch In Time” (a macabre alternative-history thriller), of which the relative short film “A Catch In Time: Chapter One” is available on the “Human No More” (Trash-Can Virus Limited Edition) Blu-ray. I've also written & directed the feature film “Human No More: A Macabre Thriller” and the feature-length “Human No More: A Making-of Documentary: Reinventing Perspective”. All are available via Texas POËtrope (Books - Films - Music) @ www.poetrope.com — Also, please visit FILMS at www.poetrope.com for free streaming links to my movies. I greatly appreciate anyone checking out my work. Although I am admittedly a hermit, I do create to share my imagination with others.

What lessons have you learned as a writer?

- I learned very early on that I write best when I follow my instincts, which have always led me down dark, mind-expanding storytelling paths. I also realized I am not a writer of multiple genres, but strictly the macabre, which I embrace and have committed to. When it comes to creative writing, I do not try to please anyone but myself. I think that is very important, because I certainly make very, very little money writing or making films. Some have said to me, “Create what other people want, then the money will come.” I disagree. This is my life and I likely only have one to live; plus, writing and filmmaking are extremely difficult from my perspective—getting the perfect words on the page or images on the screen—and therefore I am not going drive myself mad and work myself to death trying to

second guess what the rest of the world wants; or some publisher or film studio or producer. I write what's inside of me. I am loyal to my muse. Even so, I do follow a couple vague rules. One—never ever be boring. And two—always try to 'show' the reader what is occurring in a story, don't just tell them. I despise stories that read as if the writer is merely rattling off a list of what happens. i.e., Bob did this. Then Bob did that. Then Bob decided he wanted to talk to Sue. Bob always knew he loved Sue. Sue is a girl that hates Bob. Uhgggg.

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

- Hmmmm...I have to say I'm much more of a misanthrope than a humanitarian. And I like most animals I've met more than most people. But, having said that, I also must confess that while I have almost no faith in the herd or hive-mind, I do believe in the 'individual' human. With this in mind, I always try to be courteous to others I cross paths with during any given day. I also can't help but constantly make fun of this silly insane world, and am compelled to lighten my mood, and the mood of others, by making something dull, dreary—or hell, even horrid or sunny—funny. I like to make jokes and shift perspectives from the mundane and, if I'm lucky, I make myself and someone else laugh. To more directly answer the question, in everyday life I attempt to bring a laugh and a smile to others, by calling out the absurd and not-so-serious side of the daily all-too-serious madness around us all.

If your life had a theme song what would it be?

- Considering my darkly humorous side, I'd love to get a rise out of readers of this interview by saying "People=Shit" by Slipknot. However, if I must claim a tamer and less controversial theme song, I'm more likely to listen repeatedly to songs such as "Alive And Kicking" by Simple Minds. Or even "Amsterdam" by Coldplay. Or "Sometimes" by Midnight Oil. Or "Hell On Wheels" by Betty Blowtorch. Maybe "There Is A Light That Never Goes Out" by The Smiths and then "Irresponsible Hate Anthem" by Marilyn Manson. I really have too many personal theme songs to mention here, but maybe a singular leitmotif or trend is showing through.

Name two authors you wish more people knew about

- Other than Me and Myself—and L.R. Liverpool? Oops! That's three, isn't it? Well, how about I just say Joris-Karl Huysmans—"La Bas" (Down There) is an enjoyable and existentially profound novel, and sometimes funny as hell (pun definitely intended)—and also Aleister Crowley. Putting aside the latter's esoteric Magick and mumbo jumbo, his fiction is shockingly well written, offbeat, and often quite thought-provoking.

What are some of your hobbies?

- I suppose collecting (watching) movies and (reading) vintage books. Although I don't really think of those as hobbies, because I consider them part of my ongoing education in

regard to honing my skills by observation and absorption, as well as often being direct research and inspiration for stories I'm currently developing (writing) or might develop. I also own/run an online store called The Vintage Bookshop @ Texas POËtrope (www.poetrope.com). Of course, my own books are available in the Bookshop, should anyone be interested in autographed trade paperbacks.

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

- Honesty and not too much negative hyperbole. Although hyperbole can be a fantastic way of conveying heartfelt (if not hilarious) passion. But what I like most in a reviewer's review is when they get into details that support the goodness of the writing/storytelling, which shows they really did read the book and it made them think.

What are you currently working on?

- I am currently finishing the last chapters of my new Macabre Thriller "Heather's Treehouse", which is an epic and grisly, dark, mind-bending ride through a bit of 1716 history and the unsuspecting 1988 milieu of small town Edgewood, Texas. Little is sacred and extensive mayhem will ensue. It is intensely plot and character driven, as with everything I create, and will be a very relative commentary on today's polarizing and nihilistic world. I hope to have the novel available by Christmas 2024.

What books are currently in your to-read list?

- Shelves and shelves of them—way too many to list here. But I am currently reading "The Dying Citizen: How Progressive Elites, Tribalism, and Globalization Are Destroying the Idea of America" (this should be required reading for everyone) and "Alfred Hitchcock: The Complete Films". But next on my list are "Nihilism: The Root of the Revolution of the Modern Age", "A Clockwork Orange", and a rereading of "Dune" the Folio Society Edition. I also have several more books I need to get through for research, in effort to write the screenplay for the prequel/sequel to my "Human No More" film, titled "HNM: Look At The Sky"—a movie I've been in pre-production and early-production on for some time.

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

- Again, there are several, but I have endlessly rewatched "Blade Runner" and director David Fincher's "Fight Club" and "The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo".

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

- That I don't absolutely despise everyone. I really do like and love several excellent people. Those who are unique and don't adhere to the hive mind. At least not too much (wink).

Its Release Day! How do you celebrate?

- I celebrate by not writing. And maybe watching a movie—or even going to the theater and eating a giant popcorn and Peanut M&Ms, along with a Coke Zero (lots of ice). Oh, and taking a big breath.

What is your writing routine with a new book? Do you outline your stories or do you do what the characters tell you to do as you go along? Mix of both?

- I do whatever suits me for the story. But usually I do a tremendous amount of thinking and making notes (and doing research as needed) before I begin writing. Although if a 'bit' comes to me I will certainly write it out as if writing the book. I also make extensive, if a little chaotic, outlines. In many ways I don't consider myself a writer, but more of a story designer. After I've beaten and massaged a tale to death in my mind and on paper via notes and story string-outs, I will then become the creative writer and dive into a first draft. But I also don't write stories straight through. I focus on paragraphs or sentences endlessly before moving forward. I am a chronic rewriter all the time. So, once I present a first draft, it is pretty much a finished story or book with little wiggle room.

What got you into writing?

- First I just listened to books being read to me. Then I read books that interested me. As well, my Grandmother would take me to the bookstore in the mall and let me shop and pick out books to read, which she would then buy for me. After a while, I was just so fascinated with the imagination and other worlds or realities, that I was compelled to want to create them for myself.

If you could have any super power, what would it be and why?

- I would be Cash-Creator-Man, so I could always have enough money on hand to produce my films and write the screenplays and novels I want to write, without having to spend 40 hours a week at a day job. I'd also then have a secondary power that would allow me to siphon off money from all those who I believe are inherently wicked, self-serving, and exploitative, such as career politicians, globalists, and social media gods. I would then give this money to those I deem worthy; the uniquely creative and talented individuals who are endlessly struggling and starving for their art.

If you came with a warning label, what would yours say?

- Buckle up! You're getting ready to go places you never thought you'd go—and if you survive the ride, you'll have something to talk and think about.

What do you need in your writing space to help you stay focused?

- My iPod, which contains my film score collection, so I can pop in my earbuds, choose the perfect music, and tune the world out.

What comes first for you — the plot or the characters — and why?

- Both. I believe plot and character are equally important and that one should drive, or fuel, the other. I always expend a tremendous amount of effort to marry both so one without the other just wouldn't work quite right. Character moments should steer the plot and plot should inspire the characters. It's all physics—its all cause and effect.

What is the most difficult part of your writing process?

- Being distracted by day-to-day life, so that I lose momentum on any project I might be working on, whether it be a book or film. It can be extremely difficult for me to stay focused once I have to pull away and deal with the outside world. Then, when I get back to the project, I have to find my way in again. Because of this, I find it best for me to always stop in the midst of action or dialogue or a description, so that my brain will continue working on various elements and aspects, or bits of character and action, while I'm forced to fulfill real-world chores. Also, a way I combat what I call "cracking back in" is to always start working from the beginning of a current chapter or from the previous chapter. It's like getting a running start and building up momentum (while I also massage and tweak what I've previously written) and can then hit the blank page head-on and at a super-charged pace instead of pathetically stalled on the last wobbly sentence I pecked out. Starting to write at the fragile, raggedy end is like jumping into a swimming pool with no water, in my opinion. But even if there really is no water in the pool, I'd still rather run across the yard, up the diving board, and then jump through the air to see where and how I land. Fortunately, as a writer, this technique won't have my brains splattered and bones broken on the pool bottom. Although devious and cruel, the white screen of my computer is much more somatically forgiving, if not always to my general state of mind.

Who has been the biggest supporter of your writing?

- My mother and father have supported me in all my creative endeavors throughout my life. Other than my parents, it would have to be my longtime friend and partner-in-crime, Rick

Wildridge, who has also worked on my films with me, helped directly on the proof-reading of my early writing efforts, been an investor, and goes way, way back to when he was a manager/agent of my all-original band “About 9 Times”. He even plays a pivotal role in my feature film, “Human No More”. But for the last couple of decades my newer pal and partner-in-crime, producer/editor Matthew Sanderson, has been extremely instrumental in regard to my encouragement and writing on a day-to-day level. He is the soldier on the ground with me and understands what I’m usually trying to accomplish, going out of his way to help me achieve it, instead of steering me astray as some producer/editors might do.

What time of the day do you usually write?

- When I was much younger I always wrote very late at night, but at my current age and with my current responsibilities, I find I work best very early in the morning. I like to get up before the Sun, make my morning mocha, check my email, and get to writing before my brain starts to go into zombie mode for the day. Most things I can do while half awake, but not my writing. It is a very intense and emotional process that requires a lot of energy, which I usually only have during the magic hours after dawn and before noon.

What movie could you watch over and over again?

- Once again, there are too many to list only one—and the films I watch repeatedly can also be cyclical. But the movies I’ve returned to most are “Blade Runner”, “Vertigo”, “Fight Club”, “Inception”, and “The Silence Of The Lambs”.

What's your favorite snack?

- I could eat mixed nuts all day. Or spicy trail mix and Peanut M&Ms (from the freezer).

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

- I work with a longtime friend and new author, L.R. Liverpool. She discovered Itsy Bitsy Book Bits while researching promotional avenues for her own novel “The Man In Black”, which is published via my company brand BCP/Texas POËtrope. She had very good luck with Itsy Bitsy and suggested I give them a try. My experience as an indie author is that convincing anyone to even consider reading my books is very difficult at best. I hope Itsy Bitsy will help bring some much-needed eyes and corruptible minds to my books—and even films.

