

Interview for “ ‘Gigolo’ on the Row” by Jack Eadon

Today, Tyler R. Tichelaar of Reader Views is pleased to be joined by Jack Eadon, who is here to talk about his new book “ ‘Gigolo’ on the Row.”

Jack Eadon began by writing a book in grade school, then a short story. In high school he began a decade long career in rock music. He then spent many years in the corporate world and opened his own business. Today, however, he resides in southern California and writes full-time.

Tyler: Welcome, Jack. I’m glad you could join me today. Well, I’m sure your book’s title alone will get attention, but could you tell us briefly what “ ‘Gigolo’ on the Row” is about?

Jack: Yeah, it’s a great title, one spawned by my editor back then. She lived on the same street as I did, and the nickname for our street was “The Row.” Short for Radon Row—long story.

Tyler: I understand the book has a spiritual element to it? Would you explain that?

Jack: Sure. Since Mark is going through Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome and is trying to get over the shock of losing his wife so suddenly, he hallucinates that she appears to him and even talks to him. But, even as you read the book you’re not really sure if visions of Katrina are real or his imagination. I like playing with the thin line that exists between the supernatural realm and fact. Even as the book ends, I leave it just a little unclear how much is real and how much is imagination. It makes it more interesting that way.

Tyler: Where did you come up with the idea of a husband finding out secrets about his wife after her death?

Jack: Actually I sort of fell into it by accident as I wrote the book. It was long after I wrote it that I came across another excellent book called “The Photograph” that postulates to a similar concept. It’s quite a rich concept when you think of it. When different people who are so close have such a different spin on things; it shows that different realities can exist closely side-by-side. It’s almost spooky, but terribly interesting.

Tyler: Do Mark’s visions of Katrina help him reconcile his wife’s secrets with the relationship they once had?

Jack: Actually he is in such shock after her death, Katrina's visions just forestall his getting on with the grieving process. He hangs on to his memories of her rather than sees the reality of who she actually was. Her duality can make you angry at her but it can allow you to accept her as a human being with foibles.

Tyler: Would you tell us a little bit about the protagonist, Mark, who is really the detective in that he is seeking answers about who his wife really was. What makes him stand out from the main characters in other thrillers?

Jack: That's a very good question that I had to think long and hard about. It ends up that Mark is a real simple guy, and is trying to recover from a very difficult circumstance. So, to that extent he's a benign guy in a complex world. HE is not the point of his own drama. Instead, he finds himself in a rich drama that he isn't totally aware of till the end. That's what keeps "Gigolo" suspenseful throughout, even though it is basically a quiet book. It is also one of my favorites in that as I wrote it, I borrowed some of Shakespeare's tools as I constructed the plot and drew the characters like Penelope and Bryce and others. But actually I did very little plot construction; I basically put well-defined characters on stage and let them do their thing; I didn't get in the way with plot-driven thinking at all.

Tyler: Do you feel it's true what many writers say—that you can't make the characters do anything—they do what they want to do? What kinds of struggles have you had in creating characters?

Jack: It is easy to want all characters to be nice people. But they aren't and can't be. You have to let them be creeps if they are creeps. Take Katrina for instance. It is easy to want her to be the perfect angel that Mark always envisaged, but she is not that and THAT realization is a key element of what makes "Gigolo" so real and bittersweet at times . . . and makes her exceedingly real.

Tyler: Where does the "Gigolo" fit into the book?

Jack: Because Mark is guilty for NOT being real supportive of his dead wife, he is VERY supportive of other neighbor women. As a result he gets a reputation in the neighborhood for being a real ladies man. One neighbor man even said "if we paid Mark for his services I guess we go call him a " 'Gigolo' on the Row." That line is what I call the title line in the title scene. That concept of burying the title in a particular scene was made popular by J. D. Salinger in the "Catcher in the Rye," one of my favorite books, and Salinger is certainly a mentor of mine!

Tyler: Jack, I know you've written several other books. Would you tell us a little bit about your past books? What sets " 'Gigolo' on the Row" apart from the others?

Jack: Well, without exception my books are fiction-based-on-fact dramas. They spin from a well-defined setting and characters into a suspenseful conflict of sorts, and in some way are spawned from my own experience. Then the main characters must find their way out of a dilemma. "Gigolo" is just a simple story that could happen to anyone. I usually twist reality in some fashion, and people like that twist because it is a surprise, but as Shakespeare would say, it is a fully expected surprise: you stop and say "I shoulda seen that coming." But I bury the reality so deeply, that you don't really see it coming, but as one reader of Gigolo said, "bitchin' ending. I shoulda known . . ."

Tyler: What would you say were your influences, literary or otherwise, in writing your books?

Jack: I absolutely love Fitzgerald, Shakespeare (not the writing as much as the plot and character components), J. D. Salinger, and I like the story-telling of Grisham and King. I love the way King casually names characters who appear on-stage for brief times. I'd use that technique more but I'd be afraid using it would cause people to say 'copy-cat.' I admire the research of James Michener, and I also love his use of point-of-view—absolutely wonderful. I'm writing a book now that emulates his work in the opening scene of Hawaii, except it's in my mother's womb instead of the Pacific!

Tyler: Speaking of point of view, what point of view did you use for "Gigolo" and why did you decide on that point of view?

Jack: I used primarily third person point of view to allow the reader to see things closely from Mark's perspective. I use a close psychic distance to let the reader feel Mark's pain. Because Katrina "leaves us" so suddenly, that really works. I have a few nice flashbacks that drift into a more omniscient voice, but mostly I want the reader to see Mark's recollections as part of his own grieving process.

Tyler: Jack, I understand you used to work in the music industry. Would you tell us a little bit about your musical background? Has music influenced your writing?

Jack: Well, I certainly have written a lot of songs and to that extent have poured my sense of the poetic into my writing. I also have demonstrated a penchant for writing moralistic drama in the musical form and put that unabashedly into my writing. I love playing with morals and how they affect people's judgment. I love "right" winning over "wrong."

Tyler: You also earned an MBA and used to own your own business, yet now you write full-time. How did you make that transition from the corporate world to what must be the much more solitary life of a writer? What lessons did you learn in the corporate world, and were you able to apply them to being a writer?

Jack: Well, my business was commercial photography. So, I spent long hours problem solving special effects and special lighting. That was pretty much a metaphor for my writing. I needed to learn absolute patience and realize that every word, like every shadow, was important. That gave me a sort of obsessed view of the intricacies of my palette, be it film or paper.

Tyler: Do you think photography, which is about how we see or view and frame objects, has affected how you see the world and how you depict it in your novels?

Jack: One of my biggest strengths is the way I can move the camera in a scene. If the reader pays close attention to the details, they can see a lot of my work as a film, and to see it on that level is quite enjoyable, but they must be willing to read a bit slower and savor the journey, not just dash past it.

Tyler: On your website, you bill yourself as "Jack Eadon, the world's most famous unknown author" yet you also state how rich your life has been. What do you see as your biggest disappointments and your greatest joys about being a writer?

Jack: I'd say the greatest disappointment is the occasional realization that all I'm doing is writing words on a page. It's very existential. My greatest joy is when just one reader can quote a line or feed back a scene in just the way I wrote it and imagined it for years. Then I know that I've really gotten to them—penetrated their head and soul!

Tyler: That sounds like a wonderful compliment to your writing, Jack. What advice would you give to other writers trying to get published or to establish themselves?

Jack: Write because you love it. Because you can create something from nothing that someone else can read and share. Don't write to become famous or rich. If that is to come, that will come. Enjoy the journey! And learn your craft well. Because writing appears so easy, many people don't study it intensely. The more you study it, the more you realize you can learn.

Tyler: Jack, will you tell us about your website and what further information can be found there about “ ‘Gigolo’ on the Row” ?

Jack: I have a number of web sites, my main one is <http://www.eadonbooks.com>. At my main site I list all seven of my books with links to several of my other sites. I also have excerpts of each of my books.

Tyler: And finally, Jack, what can we expect next from your pen?

Jack: I'm currently working on a nonfiction expose of my peppered health history, which is quite dramatic at times, and a second edition of my book, “The Charm from Delhi,” where I will rewrite much of the lead character to make him more likeable. It is true that a book is actually never done. It just gets revised and revised as new thoughts occur to the author.

Tyler: Thank you, Jack, for joining me today. I wish you continued success with your already successful writing career.

Jack: Thanks, Tyler, and please invite me back to Readerviews again! It's always a pleasure.