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Jim Provenzano - Finding Tulsa, a novel

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Palm Drive Publishing announces the September 2020 publication of Lambda Literary Award-winning author Jim Provenzano's seventh novel, *Finding Tulsa*.

About **Finding Tulsa**

Stan Grozniak, director of '90s B-movies and art films, almost self-sabotages a prestigious directing gig after casting his rediscovered teenage summer stock crush. Still haunted by the death of Rick Dacker, the sexy star of his cult action trilogy, Stan attempts a romance with actor Lance Holtzer, his 'Tulsa' from a small town Ohio production of the musical *Gypsy*. Discovering more about himself than he wants to admit, he traces his recent success with past obsessions, including a traumatic teenage encounter with an overly affectionate uncle. Framed through a visit to Stan's boyhood home, the tale of his rise to cinematic success—and the sacrifices he made—captures the passion and heartache of making love, making movies, and the occasional riot.

Visit the author's IndieGogo fundraising page, which includes the book trailer, at <https://igg.me/at/findingtulsa>

<http://palmdrivepublishing.com/>

<https://www.jimprovenzano.com/>

Note; when requesting a review copy, specify your preference; ebook, PDF or paperback (print will only available by September).



Jim Provenzano is the author of *Finding Tulsa* (Palm Drive Publishing), *Now I'm Here* (Beautiful Dreamer Press), the Lambda Literary Award-winning *Every Time I Think of You*, its sequel *Message of Love* (a Lambda Literary Award Finalist), the novels *PINS*, *Monkey Suits*, *Cyclizen*, the stage adaptation of *PINS*, and the short story collection *Forty Wild Crushes*. Audiobook adaptations include *PINS* (Paul Fleschner, narrator), *Every Time I Think of You*, and its sequel *Message of Love* (Michael Wetherbee, narrator).

Born in New York City and raised in Ashland, Ohio, he studied theatre at Kent State University, has a BFA in Dance from Ohio State University and a Master of Arts in English/Creative Writing from San Francisco State

University. A journalist, editor, and photographer in LGBT media for three decades, he lives in San Francisco. www.jimprovenzano.com

Since 1997, **Palm Drive Publishing**, an independent small press based north of the Golden Gate Bridge, has published award-winning literary novels, memoirs, short story anthologies, essay collections, and photo books. Publisher Mark Hemry steered Dr. Jack Fritscher's novels *Some Dance to Remember* (Lammy finalist) and *What They Did to the Kid* respectively to "Best Book of the Year" and "Storyteller of the Year" awards from *ForeWord* Magazine.

Hemry also commissioned and published Jim Stewart's beloved award-winning memoir, *Folsom Street Blues*, and edited and designed the international multi-author fiction anthologies *Tales of the Bear Cult* and *Chasing Danny Boy: Powerful Stories of Celtic Eros*.

Other finalist trophies on the Palm Drive shelf include honors accrued from the Lambda Literary Foundation, multiple *Independent Publisher* and *ForeWord* awards, as well as two gold medals for "Best Book of the Year" in 2008 and 2017 from the National Leather Association Literary Awards for *Gay San Francisco: Eyewitness Drummer* and for *Gay Pioneers: How Drummer Magazine Shaped Gay Popular Culture 1965-1999*.

Advance praise for *Finding Tulsa*

"*Finding Tulsa* reminds you what a good friend a novel can be. It's about friendship, about "losing men and then finding them," about brotherly love and conflict, and the possibility of resolution. It's sexy, funny, astute, panoramic – it knows about suburban Ohio basement rec rooms and glam parties in the Hollywood hills. I felt like I had met a charming guy at a cocktail party who seemed to get me, understood my past, confided his own, and then disappeared to another better party before I was ready for him to leave. And it's wrapped around a fearless, wrenching narrative about facing your childhood demons, raising the question of whether or not one of the demons might have been you. There's so much to savor, to argue with, reflect upon, learn from, enjoy." – **John Weir**, Lambda Literary

Award-winning author of *The Irreversible Decline of Eddie Socket*

“*Finding Tulsa* is sexy, romantic, witty, engaging, both cleverly current yet sweetly retrospective. It's Jim Provenzano's most complex and accomplished novel. He gets so much right and so evocatively about show business, from those school plays we all remember to Hollywood made-for-television movies, with delicious stops at boyhood Super-8 movies and out of town gay porn shoots.”

– **Felice Picano**, author of *Justify My Sins: A Hollywood Novel in Three Acts*, and the *New York Times* best-seller *Like People in History*

“Everything’s coming up roses in *Finding Tulsa*, Jim Provenzano’s intoxicating portrait of an artist as young to middle-aged man, from a high school musical techie in torn shorts to a semi jaded independent gay filmmaker. It’s a well-told yarn, full of humor and panache about a Hollywood player torn between his boyhood crush and a porn star. Spin the bottle, ride the Rolodex, and fasten your seat belt for Provenzano’s sweet roller coaster ride.”

– **Marc Huestis**, film director (*Sex Is ...*) and author of *Impresario of Castro Street: an Intimate Showbiz Memoir*

“Jim Provenzano must have been spying on me from my adolescence (making short films with my brother) to my adulthood (making gay movies and TV series). I identified with every twist, turn, and blow by blow of this sexy show biz saga!”

– **Sam Irvin**, Director of *Dante’s Cove*; Co-Producer of *Gods And Monsters* and *The Broken Hearts Club*

“Lights! Camera! Action! *Finding Tulsa* is a show-biz comedy told by a witty industry insider divulging how plays and movies and characters like ‘Tulsa’ help gay boys survive adolescence, create identity, and worship beauty. What better icons could Provenzano have picked than Sondheim and *Gypsy* on which to fly his vivid characters, backstage intrigues, and dialogue sure to thrill the theater and movie queen in all of us. Writing at the top of his powers, with his striped tie and hopes high, he’s got rhythm. All he needs is you to go with ’im. A splendid romp! Let him entertain you!”

– **Jack Fritscher**, author of *Mapplethorpe: Assault with a Deadly Camera* and the Lammy Finalist, *Some Dance to Remember: A Memoir-Novel of San Francisco 1970-1982*

“Jim Provenzano's sexy, funny and soulful new novel *Finding Tulsa* is a beautiful deep-end dive into the memory of desire, the thumping bass note that drives life and art. The novel gorgeously explores how our hearts and cocks are woven with our theatre and films as we figure out how to be the star of our own queer story.”

– **Tim Miller**, Performer and author of *A Body in the O*

“Jim Provenzano always keeps in mind what the original ‘Tulsa’ said in *Gypsy*: ‘This step is good for the costume.’ Provenzano never misses a step as he suavely combines aesthetics and homoerotics in a work that is throughout deeply touching.”

– **David Ehrenstein**, author of *Open Secret: Gay Hollywood–1928-2000*

Published Review excerpts for Jim Provenzano's previous novels

Now I'm Here (2018, Beautiful Dreamer Press)

"In *Now I'm Here*, a Queen show serves as backdrop to a burgeoning romance. In addition to conveying the power of listening to music, Provenzano captures the intensity of making it: When Joshua, a piano prodigy and would-be rock star, sets fingers to keyboard, Provenzano beautifully renders his passionate character's combination of fugue state and frenzy." – *San Francisco Examiner*

"This storytelling method effectively and passionately conveys the lengthy, turbulent evolution of their compelling, inspiring and uplifting relationship... The love story of Joshua and David reminds the reader how to appreciate the extraordinary in the ordinary. Professionally speaking, neither of these men achieves fame or accomplishes anything especially newsworthy, but what they share emotionally is nothing short of remarkable. Some books you read for laughter, intrigue, debate or information. *Now I'm Here* makes you feel." – *Edge Media Network*

"California author Jim Provenzano joins the great novelists who have written important and lasting novels about men in love, and while he has won prizes for his work it is now, with his publication of *Now I'm Here* that he joins the ranks of the major authors who have had a lasting imprint on our society and the LGBTIQ community. André Aciman, Andrew Holleran, Colm Toibin, Edmund White, and now Jim Provenzano are important artists whose impact is significant." —*San Francisco Review of Books*

"Provenzano reminds us of a swath of gay men and boys who remain largely overlooked; the small town, Midwestern gays whose psyches, like their turf, have been regarded as flyover country. As Provenzano traces the friendship and falling outs between Eric and his two closest friends through the 1970s and 1980s, we hear untold tales of sexual awakening among the decidedly un-'woke,' we see the long-nailed finger of HIV/AIDS scratching far beyond big cities, and we are reminded how limited our sense of 'gay community' can sometimes be." —*Passport*

"Provenzano has honed his craft and takes you on this dizzying ride with the able assurance of a pro. His rendering of the mid-Seventies is deadly accurate ... and will bring a smile of remembrance to your face if you were coming of age then. He never missteps or falls short of the mark emotionally, either. The characters are all organic, built and embroidered on with well-chosen detail, and this never once feels false or contrived as many romances do. So, even if you're not exactly a Queen fan (and why not, I wonder?), you'll enjoy this supremely well-plotted and populated romance. Highly recommended." —*Out in Print*

"Joshua and David come to life through Provenzano's prose, as does the town of Serene. The story beautifully conveys the exhilaration of love, the power of music, and the profound sadness of loss. The late '70s and '80s were, in many ways the last remnants of a more innocent time. Provenzano's deft writing whisks readers back to those halcyon days."

– *Prizm News*

“Set in a fictional Ohio town like the one Provenzano grew up in himself, *Now I’m Here* is the story of Joshua and David, two teenagers who fall in love in 1978. Their passionate affair grows into a life together in the face of religious intolerance, ‘rehabilitation therapy,’ and perhaps most significantly, the heartbreak of AIDS.” – *Los Angeles Blade*

Every Time I Think of You (Lambda Literary Award winner, 2012)

“Their love is a force of nature ... Provenzano’s sweet humor throughout the book is what makes it such a moving and satisfying read. While he certainly brings the reader to a deeper understanding of being differently-abled, he never resorts to preaching his message. These boys are too real for that.” – [Dick Smart, Lambda Literary Review](#)

“A sense of youthful, romantic optimism ... permeates the novel as a whole.”

– [Erika Jahneke, Breath and Shadow](#)

“*Every Time I Think of You* opens readers' eyes, minds and hearts to corners of the world they may never have realized existed. Everett's paralysis is less metaphoric, more an opportunity to explore the effect of disability on two growing boys who just happen to be gay. It's not easy to write a novel about sports, gay teenagers and sex in (and out of) wheelchairs. Jim Provenzano has done it, with grace and power.”

– [Dan Woog, syndicated columnist, The Outfield](#)

“With Reid and Everett, the author has created two counterparts that complement each other beautifully. Their romance, simple and pure, yet heated and passionate, is strikingly genuine. Furthermore, they’re both likable, so much so that the reader can’t help but cheer for them. Even the most jaded among us will experience a renewed faith in love and romance after reading it.” – [Christopher Verleger, Edge on the Net](#)

“There are so many levels of nuance to Provenzano's story. But reading about the clever ways which they find to spend time together is inspiring and touching. It's an exciting voyage of discovery, for them and for readers alike. When the story takes its more serious turn, *Every Time I Think of You* becomes a tale of heartbreak, courage, and healing. It's a remarkable, uplifting story.” – [David Elijah Nahmod, Bay Area Reporter](#)

“A beautiful story of friendship, devotion and love, as well as a practical lesson on dealing with physically challenged individuals.” – Eric Lind, *Echo Magazine*

“Sweet, and tender, with the right feeling for a teenage love story.”

– [Elisa Rolle, Elisa Reviews](#)

“Provenzano’s characters are rich and complex. Provenzano’s sense of pace and plotting are dead on, so things never drag, and his prose is straightforward and never showy. It’s a well-told tale whose aim to inform as well as entertain certainly hits the mark.”

– [Jerry Wheeler, Out in Print](#)

**Published review excerpts for *Message of Love* (Myrmidude Press, 2014)
a Lambda Literary Award finalist, 2015**

“The sequel to the Lambda Literary Award-winning *Every Time I Think of You* reintroduces readers to Everett and Reid as they traverse the next phases of their relationship. It is 1980 Philadelphia, and the couple has settled into their first year at Temple University, together exploring the city and campus and adjusting to dormitory domesticity. *Message of Love* is a brilliant retelling of young love and the transformations it undergoes as lovers grow from adolescence to adulthood.”

– [Philadelphia Gay News](#)

“*Message of Love* is an earnest, heartfelt and refreshing continuation of a young couple’s adventures that leaves the reader excited, amused and inspired.” – [Edge Media](#)

“I loved the way they interacted and wove themselves so completely into each other’s lives. The way it was written was pure genius on Provenzano’s part. I’ll say it again: his writing is gorgeous and sweeping and strong.” – [Boys in Our Books](#)

“By having a disabled main character, Provenzano shows us that the possibility of love also depends upon the people involved. If you doubt the concept of romance, read this and watch it come back into your life. Provenzano has created two very special characters and we love them as we read. The writing is fresh and we certainly feel the love leave the page. I really like when an author loves what he is saying—we sense that in his words and tone. It takes a brave man to write about love with a disabled person yet we feel no pity for Everett because we see him as one of us.”

– [Amos Lassen Reviews](#)

“The richness of its details and the complexities of its characters will make this a story to remember. If you are new to Reid and Everett’s story, then begin with *Every Time I Think of You*. If you are familiar with that novel, then *Message of Love* is a story not to be missed, a wonderfully satisfying and uplifting novel, certainly one of the best of 2014.

“There are so many great elements of *Message of Love*, the first being the time period of the story. The 80’s are well represented here and the in-depth research done by Jim Provenzano shows. He gets the feel of the times just right, and describes with great sensitivity the impact of Everett’s disability on their relationship, from living arrangements to their ability to have sex. There are moments in their relationship that just ring with authenticity...Bringing all these extra layers and facts into Reid and Everett’s life together helps to connect the reader intimately to their romance and growing commitment to each other.” – [Scattered Thoughts and Rogue Words](#)

Praise for Jim Provenzano's debut novel, **PINS (Myrmidude Press, 1999)**

"Provenzano has a swift and flexible style that cuts against sentiment and reveals, in moments of grace, something like true feeling. Most urgent, he shows how gay bashing is still an outlet for kids who grew up in the so-called gay '90s." —*The Advocate*

"Fully captures the reader . . . a descriptive writer of the Ernest Hemingway model; terse, stripped down, and to the point." —*Lambda Book Report*

"What starts off as yet another "coming-of-age" tale of gay youth in suburbia takes a dramatic turn and careens into a full-fledged miracle of writing. *PINS* seduces the reader into thinking that sex is the only thing on its mind. By the time Provenzano is through with his story, however, some universal truths have been examined and harshly displayed. . . . The author takes readers on the road to redemption. Joey and Dink's relationship might never be the same, but that could also be said of the reader who has grown to know and care about some very realistic characters drawn mercifully without halos or happy endings.
— Douglas A. Mendini, *The New York Blade*

"*PINS* is a fresh debut that feels psychologically on target ... A fast read, it's accessible stuff for teens as well as adults ... The author brings evident personal knowledge and a crisp, uncluttered prose style to this coming-out saga." —*East Bay Express*

"Provenzano shows a deep fondness for his characters and a sure understanding of the wrestling milieu. He's particularly adept at handling the crosscurrents of fear and lust produced by the conflict between the sport's potential homoeroticism and the team members' homophobia ... nicely captures the tender ache of adolescence."
— *Chicago Reader*

"*PINS* wrestles with his themes thoughtfully and to entertaining effect. The center of the play, though, is a gay coming-of-age story compounded by the homophobia that seems rampant in so many sports, especially those with obvious homoerotic overtones.
— *San Francisco Chronicle*

Praise for ***Cyclizen* (Lulu, 2007)**

"Juggling AIDS activism, corporate and individual greed, all through the travails of a bike messenger in search of love and belonging, *Cyclizen* is noteworthy for its fine characterization and poignant lyricism. Provenzano explores love and friendship with insight and nuance, marking his work as unique, vital and significant." —Trebor Healey, author of *Through It Came Bright Colors*

Praise for ***Monkey Suits* (iUniverse, 2003)**

"A nostalgic Manhattan-set novel about unfocused youth, mercurial boyfriends, and the early days of activism and anger. Part sneering and part servile, a nervy imbalance gives this novel a subversive, comic clout." —Richard LaBonte, *Bookmarks*

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