

As an undergraduate, I encountered the research of Simon Levay in one of my Sociology courses. As the research indicated, a part of the brain (part of the hypothalamus, actually) has a strong role in determining sexual orientation. His work, however, was somewhat discredited because his test subjects, for the most part, had died of AIDS. Since the disease compromised the brain, his findings could not be given the weight they deserved. *What if you could validate these findings?* I wondered.

So I did what writers do, I explored that notion in a story, a short story for my Fiction course. The story depicted a young man who, struggling with his sexual identity, seeks out a doctor who believes he has found the source of homosexual orientation and needs willing test subjects to cement his findings. The story did not work for several reasons. One of which, as my then professor told me, was that there was too much potential to dig deeper, something the short story form could not do justice.

Discouraged, feeling like I would never deliberately attempt all the work that novels require, I forgot about the story. However, while taking a screenwriting course the next term, after a miserable response to a working-in-a-restaurant script that only I found funny, my instructor encouraged me to drop the comedy attempt and explore something I was really invested in, something with meat, if you will. *You know, I did have this short story idea that might work better if I flushed it out...*

And so the first draft of my novel, *Regret*, came together for the first time as a screenplay. A very bad screenplay, one riddled with bad dialogue, poor pacing, and clichés. However, encouraged by the story I saw coalescing—but unsure about how to fix it as a screenplay—I thought I might write it as a book after all, something that returning to school would greatly help. So, after two years working on the draft, I completed a solid version of the manuscript for my Master's thesis.

And when the rejection letters from agents came pouring in soon after graduation, I knew I had more work to do. I did, however, have no time to dedicate to my work. (And, to be quite honest, I was sick of the thing). But as the next few years rolled on, I picked up the draft, tweaked some sentences here, filled in some holes there, and then walked away again. More rejection letters followed.

Then, near the end of 2006, I told myself that no one may ever read this story that consumed a good amount of my time if I did not hunker down and get the work polished. Oh yeah, and I thought it could really be something, a story people needed to read, something to get them talking about the themes I explored. So I *made* time to write, I *made* time to read, then I *made* time to revise, putting into practice everything I had learned over the years that was finally making sense.

By the time I submitted my draft for consideration with Star Publishing, I felt confident that I had made this book the best that I could make it, that I had produced a work pretty close to the one I originally envisioned. And when I received my copies for the first time, I took one, wrote up a nice note, then sent it off to my writing teachers.