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Out Of The Pocket



Synopsis

The 2009 Lambda Literary Award-winning novel is finally available in paperback! This new second edition includes two brand new bonus chapters, a foreword by former NFL punter Chris Kluwe, and an afterword by outsports.com co-founder Jim Buzinski. Star quarterback Bobby Framingham, one of the most talented high school football players in California, knows he's different from his teammates. They're like brothers, but they don't know one essential thing: Bobby is gay. Can he still be one of the guys and be honest about who he is? When he's outed against his will by a student reporter, Bobby must find a way to earn back his teammates' trust and accept that his path to success might be more public, and more difficult, than he'd hoped. An affecting novel about identity that also delivers great sportswriting. "A thought-provoking, funny, and ultimately uplifting story of self-actualization that masterfully defies stereotypes about both coming out and team sports." *—* School Library Journal "A thoughtful, powerful novel." *—* Booklist "It's tough enough completing your pass as the linebackers blitz, but when your private life is also crashing in, the game is about survival. A hard-hitting first novel about quarterbacking your life." *—* Robert Lipsyte, author of *Raiders Night* "How I rooted for Bobby, and all his imperfect, complicated, oh-so-human friends." *—* Catherine Gilbert Murdock, author of *Dairy Queen* and *The Off Season*

Book Information

Paperback: 292 pages

Publisher: StraBeCa Books; 2 edition (April 30, 2014)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0615987184

ISBN-13: 978-0615987187

Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.7 x 9 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 70 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #297,134 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #29 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > LGBT Issues](#) #325 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Gay & Lesbian](#)

Customer Reviews

Grade 9 Up *—* •Senior quarterback Bobby Framingham is gay and tired of keeping it a secret. He confides in a close friend who promises not to tell, and then does. Suddenly Bobby is in the

spotlight, and raw emotions come into play. His best girl friend is hurt and disgusted. His coach insists that he's not really gay. His teammates' reactions range from supportive to freaked out to furious. In the meantime, his father undergoes treatment for cancer, and the football team comes together to prepare for a championship game. The sports-action sequences are well drawn and engaging, and the bond among teammates is strong. Character interactions are believable and often surprising, and Bobby is a likable narrator. A few repetitive scenes are a small price to pay for a thought-provoking, funny, and ultimately uplifting story of self-actualization that masterfully defies stereotypes about both coming out and team sports. —Megan Honig, New York Public Library
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Bobby Framingham is one of the top high-school quarterback prospects in California. He's troubled, though, by his growing realization that he is gay—not easy in the homophobic world of school sports. He confides in his coach, a teacher, and a few friends before he is outed by an unscrupulous reporter for the school newspaper. This sets off a firestorm of national media attention, which Bobby faces bravely. At the same time, he also comes to terms with his father's cancer, and he meets a young man, whom he starts to date. At the end, Bobby finds acceptance at home, at school, and with his friends. Most of the elements in this story, told in Bobby's authentic first-person voice, ring true, from Bobby's initial struggle with his sexual identity to the sometimes hostile reaction of his teammates. Bobby's father's illness adds an unnecessary element of melodrama, but this is a minor quibble with a thoughtful, powerful novel. Grades 9-12. --Todd Morning --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I love how non stereotypical this book is. Often you see gays portrayed as soft, creative, feminine. Not here though. Bobby is a tough guy, a quarterback no less. And that comes with all sorts of different problems.

I'll say that my own review of "Out of the Pocket" was influenced by a review posted here by Zach - a gay high school athlete whose own take on this book was really interesting and helpful for me. This YA novel about Bobby Framingham, a star high school quarterback coming out and dealing with the consequences, is refreshingly different from many I've read. It does not focus on a romance - although there is one suggested. I was so pleased that it is totally PG rated (except for the general

disgusting behavior of teenage boys). This book gets you inside the head of a really good kid - who is a star and popular and all that - but not full of himself; truly a gentle, caring thoughtful young man. His personal efforts to embrace his gay self are turned upside down in a plot twist that felt very real for me, as painful as it was. This betrayal throws Bobby off track, as he watches his perfect ordered world begin to crumble. I love YA books where families matter - and Bobby's complicated relationship with his parents is excellently drawn, and becomes one of the several catalysts in the book's ongoing narrative. But his relationships with his friends - the devotion of sports teams to each other and their coach; his friendship with Carrie, the girl who - in a typical world - would have been his girlfriend; are what make this book feel so authentic. What is really appealing to me about this book is that it's all about Bobby - whatever else is happening around him, we learn about how everything touches and changes him - his thinking, his behavior, his perspective on the world. We feel his pain and confusion; we share in his happiness and growing maturity. Do read Zach's three-star review - it's a positive review, but offers insights that, as an old gay man (in spite of my two teenagers at home) I cannot. But read the book. It's worth it.

Today I want to recommend a book that is really amazing: *Out of the Pocket* by Bill Konigsberg. *Out of the Pocket* Quotes are in (brackets) Bobby Framingham is the star quarterback at the Durango High School football team, extremely talented and nobody has a doubt he'll be a successful pro one day. He has nice parents, friends and teammates and everything would be wonderful - if he didn't know he is different in a way that might destroy everything he's living for and dreaming about: Bobby is gay. Bill Konigsberg has written a novel about coming of age and coming out that is far more than the typical "I'm gay and unfortunately I'm a brilliant jock as well" story. There are no parents who disown their son, no coaches who threaten to kick him out of the team, no long term friends who kick his butt when he tells them. And most of the teammates are ok with it as well. It is a story that describes in an often funny, touching and very compelling way that being gay is still trouble - even when you are supported by most of the people you care for. You still are isolated at a point and have the feeling everything is too much to bear. Not because everybody turns against Bobby but mainly because it still is a big thing when a young man - a star quarterback by all means! - is discovered to be gay. Bobby is drawn into focus, whether he likes it or not. What makes this story so unique is the subtle changes between Bobby and all the people who are his friends, family and teammates. Yes, there are some who aren't cool with it, but most of them can handle it. But nonetheless being gay changes the attitude between Bobby and everybody he knows. And if it is only the time people need to come to terms with the news: It hurts and Bobby feels utterly alone.

Not only pure hatred and big drama but also this "gay thing " at all being such an issue is hurting and out of place. Konigsberg shows this masterfully all the time i.e. with a scene, when Bobby is interviewed after a game:(The reporters were silent. Maybe what I'd said wasn't what they'd expected, I don't know. The same guy who had asked me before the game about being a gay quarterback spoke."So how was it, being openly gay and quarterbacking a team to the championship game?"In the ensuing silence, I could feel the tension. First lines for newspaper stories across the area and even the country were being devised as I spoke."I don't know. Sort of being an openly straight quarterback, but with a lot more media attention on me, " I said.)Not only the plot but especially the characters make this story so outstanding and vivid. Every friend, Bobby's parents, the coach: The depth of them is amazing, everybody is an individual, you can tell who "speaks" just by the different phrasing Konigsberg uses for all of them.As a woman I especially appreciated the women appearing: His mother who isn't described stereotyping at all: She neither is the mother hen supporting Bobby as much as she should nor is she the dragon who drives her son out of the house as soon as she finds out he is gay. She is a warm, caring person but still has troubles to get used to a gay son. And considering all circumstances you can understand it, you know why she is troubled, fearful and yet loves her son unconditionally.And there is Carrie: Adorable, funny, big mouthed Carrie, who everybody considers to be Bobby's girlfriend, though they never really dated. At the very beginning of the book - Bobby isn't out yet - they meet in their favorite diner and Carrie starts to discuss their relationship.(She started talking loudly about her virginity."It's still here," she said, wrapping strands of her dark hair around her index finger. "And it doesn't want to be. It wants to move to Hawaii and retire, drink pina coladas under a palm tree, and get catered to by muscular Samoan boys in short shorts.") Have you ever read an announcement: "Hey, I want to have sex" that was more hilarious? I haven't by a long shot. And one of my favorites:(Carrie was there. She hated football but sometimes she came to my games. She came up behind me and placed her chin on my neck. "That was one of the finest basketball games I've ever seen," she said. I turned to her and smirked."Hockey," I corrected."Look, I may be white, but the name-calling is totally out of place," she said, kissing me on the cheek and heading out toward her car. She's so weird. I love her.)So everything about this book is amazing, a book I wasn't able to put down and stop reading before I reached the very end. In case you understand anything about football you might enjoy the book even more, I'm sure I missed some metaphores because I don't know anything about football besides the quarterback must be some really important guy for this game and that being in the pocket seems to be safer than being out of the pocket.I hope Mr. Konigsberg will publish another book soon.Just for the record: I'm not alone judging this book to be a very great

one: Out of the Pocket won the Lambda Literary Award 2009.

A high school football star, on the brink of college, has gotten to know himself well enough to be sure that he's gay. When he's just about to tell a few people closest to him, an act of betrayal takes it all out of his hands, and his secret becomes "news" in an ever-widening circle of exposure. What happens to a talented athlete, who wants a team sports career, when this information gets out before he's ready to share it? What happens to him emotionally, and how will things go with best friend, teammates, girl pals, parents, coach, college plans? And -- what's he going to do about the guy who betrayed him? In my adult life I've heard many, many stories about what things are like for a gay kid, and this book gets it just right. And: from my teen-age life I can remember the charming, youthful, manly self-possession of the high school quarterback -- Bill Konigsberg gets that right, too. Among the many strengths of this book are a protagonist who both feels deeply and can roll with things -- I especially liked the writing of scenes in the universal male locker room, with their endless "jokes" involving words like "gay" and "faggot," as seen through the eyes of a gay young adult who is their friend and teammate - and then also the awkwardness among them all post Bobby's unplanned revelation. Here and elsewhere, the book's strong messages about time and tolerance shine through.

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