

## BU21 (GRAHAM)

Stuart Slade

GRAHAM: So I've got this amazing sense of purpose, these days.

I'm so pumped up.

Basically, I got the idea a couple of weeks back. Whenever I saw my friends I started to notice that they almost always avoid mentioning BU21. Like it never happened. Which is weird.

It's English, isn't it? Brush it under the carpet, you know -

If you walked down the street with a unicorn's horn sticking out your forehead, everybody would be like *-(English embarrassment.)*

Ah - oh, look - what lovely roses! It's not malicious, they're just trying to not bring up painful shit.

But it's like the most important event in my life just increasingly is edited out of my life.

Sod that. That's why I'm writing the book.

Ta da! BU21: The Survivors' Stories.

I was asked to do it - it wasn't, like, from me - my agent said there were like twenty publishers fighting for my story.

But I don't want to focus just on my story. I mean, I'm at the centre of it, but -

So what I'm also doing is doing little vignettes of other peoples' experiences too, you know?

And the PTSD group I go to - there are all these people with all these inspiring stories -

And every time I go, I go home and write down their stories, for the book. Obviously in the book I'll mask their identities, you know - I'll call Alex 'Seb' or something, and instead of him losing his girlfriend he'll lose, I don't know, his boyfriend - give it a more modern angle, you know?

And Izzy I'll change to her sister dying, not her mum - and change her name to like

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Ellie or something. Maybe her twin sister?

You know, to mask their identities, and to focus the story a little to make it more - more - I don't know -

Not exciting - that's ghoulish -

More 'resonant' - that's the word the publisher used.

Resonant.

And before I signed up I made it clear that a proportion of the money I get will go to the BU21 Survivors' Charity.

Fifteen per cent.

Which doesn't seem much - but - I mean, I'm actually writing the thing and I have to be reimbursed for my time, you know - because while I'm doing it, I'm not driving the van.

Well, there's a ghost writer who's doing a lot of the actual wordsmithing you know - the keyboard-pounding.

It's actually the same guy who did all those SAS guys' books?

I can live with that.

You know what else? I'm doing a speech with the Prime Minister next month - well, he's going to be there - probably - at a rally for the 22/7 Action Group.

Boy done good, you know?