



Out of Touch

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Twenty-four-year-old Aidin, a wealthy socialite and self-proclaimed "club god," lives a magazine life based on decadence and excess that includes drugs, sex, and gourmet food. One morning, after a night of heavy partying, Aidin awakes completely vacant of any sensation. Will he slip back into his addictive habits, or is there truly a conspiracy underway, as he suspects? The answer forces him to make a life-altering decision.

Out of Touch Details

Date : Published December 28th 2010 by Otherworld Publications LLC (first published November 16th 2008)
ISBN : 9780982649480
Author : Brandon Tietz
Format : Paperback 264 pages
Genre : Science Fiction Fantasy

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From Reader Review Out of Touch for online ebook

David Keaton says

An intriguing premise that at first smacks a bit of Brett Easton Ellis's usual Dead Kids Walking, then later turns a bit Palahniuk with a "recreational terrorism" subplot, but certainly there's a unique voice on display here, one that's both hilarious and fascinating, especially regarding the protagonist's condition. If you've read any jacket copy, it's no secret that the hero has lost his "sense of touch" (and all the symbolism that entails). But the fact that Tietz addresses readers' concerns, such as detailing how this affects routines regarding defecation and impotence, demonstrates that this author's heart is certainly in the right place. These are the nasty things we want to hear about, and my main frustrations were an abandonment of those issues as the book got cookin'. But then again, I enjoy reading about things others might not, and when the plot heads into twisty mystery territory, or indulges the therapy interludes with the cheekily-named "Dr. Dana Paradies" (making her what? Therapy Parody? A Day in Paradise?), these moves ironically may satisfy more mainstream readers. The clubbing minutia can be a bit tedious, but it also serves as an interesting time capsule, and there's an impressive set-piece describing a night of debauchery before the hero's condition kicks in that makes it worth it. I'd complain about the telegraphed twists, but I've been too busy trying to translate the secret Braille message on the cover (which either says, "My Name Is Mud" or "Is This Cake Or Meat?") But the book is definitely cynical and irreverent enough to satisfy. And it seems like more irreverence is on the horizon with his upcoming Christian Erotica (!) *Good Sex, Great Prayers*, so I'll be coming back.

Richard Thomas says

I've read a lot of Brandon Tietz's short stories, and have been very impressed with his work. Much like Caleb's review below, I also avoided this book for awhile. Maybe I worried it would be a watered down Palahniuk or Ellis, something I would cringe at. It isn't. I should have trusted my instincts about Tietz's work and read this much sooner.

"Everyone is two people."

Lacking the overt violence of American Psycho, but keeping all of the dysfunction, duality and superficiality, this book could indeed be the bastard love child of Ellis and Palahniuk. What at first seems like only surface, the shallow name brand dropping, the easy fix of coke and sex and booze and club hopping, evolves into a much more complicated character study, the evolution (or devolution) of Aidin.

Tietz does a great job of keeping the tone light, and humorous, while at the same time revealing the worst characteristics of humanity. We may hate Aidin, or we want to be him, but in time we sympathize, we empathize, and by the end of the book, are emotionally and mentally spent.

"...maybe you started something you shouldn't have..."

This was a wonderful debut novel, really fun to read, captivating, an echo of Glamorama, and early Palahniuk, back when he didn't suck so much. I look forward to his next book, and having read a good deal of it, I can honestly say that it will probably be even better than OUT OF TOUCH.

Brandon Tietz is an emerging author. He is somebody that you should keep your eye on. He hasn't disappointed me yet.

Gordon says

It's exciting, a page-turner for sure, as I read it in one day (a rarity). The pacing and structure are solid, the themes well-developed, and it's just effing funny, with some biting social satire and a nice collection of zingers. We enjoy reading about this vapid douchebag protag losing his sauce and going through a therapeutic Tool Academy of sorts. There are tons of timely pop-culture references for those who enjoy such things, and it was fun tracing a novel's plot through the geography and landmarks of my own city for once.

My criticisms are the overuse of Palahniuk-ian staples like sentographs and those meaning-of-life interjections that try too hard to convince you how clever the book's going to be or how wisened its narrator is. It does makes for an effective rhythm much of the time, but I couldn't get Chuck's voice out of my head, and the story doesn't need it, having plenty going for it otherwise. I had the twist (one of them, anyway) figured out from the first chapter, though it didn't detract from my enjoyment; might've even been by design, I dunno.

At the risk of making a cheesy connection, I thought the tone of this book actually had a lot in common with my own, *Major Inversions* (the Palahniuk influence, certainly), so if you liked that, pick this up. As with Chuck, its pace and humor might also make it an excellent recommendation for those who don't traditionally read a lot of books.

Peter Goutis says

This is a book you can recommend to everybody. I'd like to say more, but the "official" version isn't out yet. No need to rub salt in the wounds. But everybody should be checking this out in November.

Nicholas Karpuk says

I'm not sure if I've ever read a book that felt more like a writer's first attempt at a novel.

Many writers start out aping the style of the authors who inspired them to start writing in the first place. This is natural. But at some point a distinct style emerges, and that's the point at which you should probably start publishing.

There's a certain arrogance innate to the tone of Palahniuk. He gets away with this because what he presents is usually interesting and often unexpected. This has even gotten him in trouble with books like *Snuff* where he was visibly out of his depth and/or too lazy to do proper research.

If you're using that tone and saying things that are common knowledge, the only way to salvage it is by suggesting an obnoxiously clueless protagonist, and as far as I could tell that's not the tactic employed here.

It leads to lines like, *"Most stories, including mine, consist of three parts or acts. The first act is called 'the set-up.'"*

For reals? Please tell me more about these set-ups you speak of!

"We're portraying a version of Lord of the Flies where we live not on an island of sand and palms, but within mansions and high-end Plaza-side condos of infinite resource. Our war is not with each other, but with the gap that lies between the generations as we come to terms with who we are and with the men and women we're expected to become."

So not really like Lord of the Flies at all then. Basically, it's like saying it's Our Town, except with space aliens. Without a narrative wink to reveal that the protagonist is a pretentious moron, I'm forced to believe this is foisted at the reader as insight.

"In doctor's speak this would be known as 'anti-productive.'"

That's actually just speak, no doctor required.

"This very well may be your daily duality, your double life. Everyone is at least two people. Miley Cyrus was Hannah Montana. Spider-Man was Peter Parker."

I'm going to stop quoting with that burning, razor-sharp observation. Most of the first half is like that.

The reason it gets the extra star is I actually finished it. There are glimmers of an interesting plot in the latter half that kept my attention just as I was getting sick of reading about a dull child of privilege who's now a super-genius but doesn't appear to write like it.

The twist ending keeps it at two stars. It feels less like a twist and more like a cop-out, a way to end the story because continuing the plot in the direction it was heading would take more effort.

Sometimes the first book written should be treated as a learning exercise and hidden away in a file cabinet.

Brian says

I thought that this was a really good book. I don't know if I would give it 3.5 stars or 4. Without giving any of the plot away it starts along one path and ends up somewhere completely different. There is no way I could have predicted where it was going. The only issue I had with it is that the plot seemed...um...jerky? At some points. Now that I think back I can see why it was like this. I would recommend this book to others.

Alissa says

I honestly thought this book was the worst I have ever read. The plot was poorly thought out and semi-entertaining at best. I didn't care one bit about the characters or their stories and only finished the book because I was trapped on a flight with nothing better to do. I was also constantly annoyed by the fact that the book was not well edited; there were multiple grammar errors throughout the book. I definitely do not recommend this book at all.

Seph Cordovano says

This just isn't my kind of book.

It's *everyone's* kind of book!

A very well plotted book with diction that just keeps you reeled in. The storyline makes for an extremely interesting and fast read because of the underlying way it relates - and that's priceless to any reader. I had an extremely hard time reading this book in the evenings before bed, as I couldn't bring myself to put it down. I would recommend this book and author (and have) to anyone.

Also, I'll be ordering the hardcover and borrowing out my paperback to people who ask me about good authors. I wouldn't dare break ties with any book worth keeping on my bookshelf, and this is one of those.

Caleb Ross says

(This review originally appeared at www.outsiderwriters.org)

For too long I avoided this book. Many people whose opinions I respect recommend it, but no matter the pressure, I politely passed. I can assume many reasons for that: perhaps the author's online persona (which, after reading this book, I realize is actually an incredibly smart marketing move); perhaps the author's local status (he's here in Kansas City, so I feared not liking the book and having to meet him one day); perhaps it was the book cover (sexy, pouty lips scream mass market trash, to me). But, after drinks with Tietz a few weeks ago, he passed me copy, so I broke down and cracked the spine a few days ago. Today, I finished. Impressed. Honestly, sad that it took me so long to give in.

Out of Touch, Tietz's first novel, is unequal parts early Chuck Palahniuk—in tone, style, and theme—and American Psycho, with the Palahniuk influence far outweighing the Ellis. Trade the corporate disenfranchisement of Fight Club's unnamed narrator with the vainglorious obsession of American Psycho's Patrick Bateman, and you get Out of Touch's Aidin [last name redacted:].

Aidin, a twenty-something socialite, slowly succumbs to what he calls "the numb," a feeling of physical and mental imperviousness. And while the state seems fun at first, allowing parlor tricks involving sewing needles to lead to many bedded women, the high quickly becomes deterioration. Out of Touch reads like a journal of sensation loss, which would imply empathy for the character's descent given another author's hand. But Tietz dodges that mode and instead focuses on style, style, style. And I love him for it.

As I closed the book this evening, I was left wondering just how amazed I'd have been had I not been so familiar with Chuck Palahniuk's earlier work. However, though Out of Touch is derivative, it is still beautifully rendered and perfectly slick.

And the ending, surprising to say the least. I want a sequel. Get on it, Tietz.

Don Insixty says

Out of Touch is about this dude named Aidin. He likes to part and debauch. He's a "club-god", whatever the hell that is. I don't know why anyone over twenty three would want to be in a club anyway, much less become a "club-god", which is probably similar to having a vast collection of STDs. Welcome to 2013, where clubs are fuckin' lame. It seems to me that Tetzuo's only grasp of nightlife is what he sees in the city that always sleeps, Kansas City. I think the novel is actually set there too. In the words of my girlfriend's dad: "How unfortunate".

Okay, damnit. The twist here is that Aidin can't feel anything. Now, we're never told exactly how much of anything Aidin can't feel because he can't feel himself getting full when he eats or gets his ass kicked but he is apparently addicted to the taste. So whatever this weird "Out of Touch" thing is, it doesn't affect his tongue. How unfortunate. Wait, get it?? The novel is called Out of Touch because the protagonist is numb and the theme of the novel is probably that the protagonist becomes "out of touch". Dang. I might be wrong about Browndong Tightazz.

The beginning of the novel (after the douche part in italics that was added in after Tinkz read chuckpalahniuk) introduces us to Aidin's therapist, Dr. Paradies, who I can only assume DIES near the end. Also, SPOILER ALERT. Dr. Paradies is Aidin's mom. You can see it yourself in the Amazon preview because some idiot put the epilogue in the preview.

Anycrunch, this is where we're first inundated with "doctor-speak" and "This is me" and "In case you're just tuning in" and more chuckpalahniuk ripoffs like Aidin tonguing a wound in his mouth (Fight Club). Then Aidin "can't feel a damn thing" but waits for the taste of copper (that's a show-don't-telling of blood) when he needs to stop tonguing the wound. There's that magical tongue. This novel should have been about a magical tongue instead.

Then Tonzils bafflez the reader by zharing zome ztrange bitz of wizdom. Like anytime you see someone who's handicapped, there's always this little part of you that has doubt. WOW. Such insight into the human condition, Brandon Tietz. That drooling cripple who's always smiling and grunting is surely a fraud, you insignificant, reprehensible douche. The part of you that has doubt, Mr. Tietz, isn't a small part at all. It's a giant part. And it's your douchiness. I'm talking to YOU, not the proverbial you that's us, the unfortunate readers. People don't need to see evidence, you asshole. That's not why blind people have seeing eye dogs and that's not why deaf people have sign language, you rabid cunt. Those things aren't "proof objects". Christ, Tietz, you. are. a. royal. douche.

I'm judging from the epilogue in the preview that Aidin has become some sort of government tool who does their dirty work or something, like Tightz is setting up for some sort of bastardized superhero serialized nonsense. It's so dumb, you guys. Don't bother with it, really. I had more to say but I've only grown angrier and angrier at Tietz while writing this one.

Read more here:

<http://doneinsixtysecondsblog.wordpress...>

Austin James says

If you're ever going to start something, do it like this!

This novel is a sucker punch to unexpected, bored readers. Tietz puts his audience in an interesting situation: falling in love with his writing isn't a choice, it's a reaction.

He twists your mind and makes a mess of your emotions. Drug scenes have an authenticity that gets you high. Sex is written so well you become aroused. The soul is so lost you don't want to get out of bed in the morning. And when it's all over, you're reborn and wonder what you've done with your life.

While reading Out of Touch, you know exactly where you are and what's coming next--until you turn the page. Only after you've finished do you realize how badly you've been beaten and used. But you don't mind; you just want more. So you wait, huddled in your corner, addicted. You wait for Tietz to speak again.

"Two crooked thumbs way up!"

Danielle Tobias says

Out of Touch is a truly surprising novel. Which is to say for all of the reasons the cynic in me anticipated disliking it, I was truly surprised to find myself outdone. However, there is an optimist in me as well, an optimist which wanted to like this novel. Having been well reviewed by writers I faithfully respect, I couldn't imagine Out of Touch being completely devoid of redeeming qualities, and it isn't.

The plot concept is original and interesting- I imagine most readers yearning for insight into the world they can't touch, the world of a man who can't feel. The novel's comparisons to works by the author's inspirations are not without merit. It bounces between being completely reminiscent of a Palahniuk or Ellis novel again and again. Some of the writing isn't bad.

However, within the first few hundred words, there are so many platitudes and tautologies I found myself scratching my head in genuine confusion. Every clever moment is instantaneously demolished by over explanation- the first few chapters are not only littered but polluted by phrases like, "in case you missed it," or "for those of you just tuning in." Surely, no author would blatantly assume their audience so stupid without good reason, I found myself thinking, but really, some of the writing in Out of Touch is so heavy handed that it's impossible to bare.

Where Out of Touch is reminiscent of Palahniuk it almost becomes a bad mockery. Chapters crammed with statistics and figures, little known facts and quirky bon mots. Yet Tietz seems to rely far too heavily on the style of writing and far too little on the credibility of what he's saying. Some, well, most of the things handed to the reader as new information, as undeniable yet unseen truths are... well, just incorrect. It becomes blatantly obvious that when it comes to insight into the worlds, professions, people and places mentioned, the idea of research has been completely eschewed. In the true spirit of remaining Palahniuk-esque, repetition and motif becomes almost tiresomely introduced. The first of these takes form in the repeated phrase, "doctor's speak," and everything that is explained as being "doctor's speak," well... isn't. "Evading," "projecting," and "generalizing" are but a few examples of this. Broad generalizations and assumptions about these things are made left and right and again left me, as a reader, feeling as if the author's complete confidence only sprung from truly believing his audience completely misinformed or under-educated to begin with.

While the protagonist's ego becomes an essential plot device, the last thing a new author should try to do is insult their audience.

Never the less, the plot is interesting enough. Each chapter leaves the reader with questions burning to be answered, and still seeking insight into the protagonist's mind and body, and despite feeling a little slighted, it's almost impossible not to continue on with this novel. Which isn't always a good thing. That optimist in me continued to bore through pages and pages only to find itself tired and weary. Inconstancy becomes a running theme. The premise of the book, of the character who cannot feel, is relentlessly ruined by references to pain or irritation. He's addicted to food, to taste- which, by explanation of the character's disorder, he shouldn't be able to sense. He can't orgasm, yet relentlessly describes things as 'orgasmic.' The list goes on.

Comparisons are made that by no stretch of the imagination make any sense. Within the first paragraph the author makes the confusing assumption that landing an airplane is akin to undercooking a steak. Metaphors

are banal, over explained. The grammar is nothing but haphazard. The whole thing is stitched together with typos.

Where the novel becomes Ellis-esque, the references are outdated. The supposed rich-kid cutting edge of the club world is described as nothing but a running list of brand name clothing, liquor and drugs that no one has paid attention to in decades, which literally cheapens the entire scene.

The book seems less of a genuine novel than an homage to the contemporary. I would love to say I finished Out of Touch, that I gave the whole thing a chance, but it isn't fair to publish this review under that assumption. I simply could not. Where the author really lost me, the protagonist starts listing his favorite novels.

American Psycho.
Choke.
Requiem for a Dream.
Trainspotting.

Really... though. We get it, kid.

With such an exceptional plot premise and so many rave reviews of both the novel and the author himself, I really did want to become a fan. In the end I just have to leave it with a slap on the shoulder, and a "maybe next time."

Nathan Pettigrew says

This book is a lot of fun. That's not to say that Aidin's journey should be taken lightly. It's not a comedy, but the author does a stellar job of allowing the reader to sit "shotgun" on the same ride that the main character is taking -the primary example being "the list" that Aidin has to complete in his therapy while confronting the fact that he's lost his ability to experience any physical sensation.

Funny thing, though, because while Aidin may wake up one day to find himself stripped of his ability to "feel," it's safe to say that he lost all "feeling" long before his condition ever kicked in.

So our numb and disconnected narrator comes to grips with that fact. You'll hear about the "twist" ending and how it comes out of left field, but not really -and I won't give away that ending of course, but it has to do with a choice that Aidin makes when given an ultimatum. His choice may not make a lot of "moral" sense to some, but this is a guy who's tired of running. He already ran from Himself during the years and events leading up this story, and this is the story of how he learns to face himself and who he is.

It can be dark, sad even, but also enlightening and fun for the reader -and that complicated dynamic is what makes Out of Touch such a great read.

The writing style is also fun in the fact that it's familiar, and yet brand new -speaking to the "Palahniuk/Ellis" influence.

Tietz isn't "imitating" these influences as much as going all out in making them known and giving a certain

due -and it's all there -from the airplane going down in the opening scene to the support groups.

Think Quentin Tarantino: His influences are not only obvious, but celebrated, played with, and improved upon.

It's got a very Modern Feel after all is said and done. It's a fast read, but a great way to spend a short time.

Stephen says

If you don't hate Brandon Tietz's protagonist, Aidin, within the first ten pages of this novel I seriously question the software of your moral GPS. If you don't desperately want to be Aidin by the last ten pages you and I didn't read the same book. Out of Touch is a novel about bizarre changes. As if caught by an atomic powered puberty, our anti-hero finds himself the victim of an unknown medical condition which leaves him entirely devoid of feeling. A cumbersome and metaphorical position for the holder of a limitless AmEx, plenty of uncut coke, a marshmallow cereal stash of pharmaceuticals and the women who er...ehm "love" him for it. As the standard accouterments of the asshole playboy becoming fleeting reveries of feeling, Out of Touch shapes into a fantastic parable for growing up.

Tietz writes like a mid-westerner. His voice is distinct and direct. Being a thoroughly modern novel Tietz breaks all the right rules when it comes to writing. Less like a novel, less even than a speech, Out of Touch is like he's telling you his own story over a bottle of Cristal at a velvet roped club. Conversational, ignoring grammar where necessary for the sake of sounding spoken rather than read; this work is closer to poetry in that way.

The novel has its bumps. I caught spelling and other non-helpful (see above) grammatical errors. The middle of the book hiccuped somewhat. The action gets lost, the voices of all the characters lose their distinction and began to sound like ventriloquists of each other. In the end it all works out alright though. Literally. Trying to stay on the safe side of spoiling I'll just say that it's a whiplash ending. Not a "my lawyer will hear about this" twisted-metal whiplash, more the long lines for admission, zero to sixty in 3 or less and "is it over already?" kind. A roller coaster you will have to ride more than once. What's more, the ending was as thick a story as the entire preceding novel and twice as ballsy. Quite a feat and quite a save.

Read this book. A must for Palahniuk and Easton-Ellis fans, Tietz successfully pays homage to some literary heavy weights and is easily elbowing his way to their stack on the shelf.

Fred Venturini says

Warning: You might not be ready for this.

Brandon Tietz is a name familiar from my time at Chuck Palahniuk's website. He's an author, active on the boards, posting excellent short stories. Out of Touch is his debut novel. I see an interview with him on the site. So I write down the name of the book, of the author, hoping to pick it up sometime soon. See if the novel is as good as the stories he's crafting.

Full disclosure: I'm not as well-read as I should be. Usually due to time constraints. Between trying to write my own stuff, and do an MBA, and date nights with my lovely wife, and keeping the grass cut, and pushing my own novel, my "to-read" pile grows faster than it should. I sat down to *Out of Touch* and literally burned through half of it, almost without blinking. The rest of the read I rationed out like that last handful of M&M's, one glorious serving at a time, fighting the urge to stuff them all in my mouth at once. The second half of the book took me almost a month to complete. I mention this because lots of people say "I read this in one sitting" which sometimes feels like they just want to get it over with. I want you to know that the combination of time anchors and my pure and unadulterated enjoyment of this book simply required that I shift it down a gear to really let the flavors mingle.

The prose has the same sensibilities that attracted me to Chuck Palahniuk—the fierce present tense, the resounding chorus and rhythm of the writing, the nihilistic sheen—a fast, furious read. But this isn't all style—the substance holds up, enhanced by a fearless writer's delivery, pushing at us scenes and thoughts we may not be ready for—coke (not the kind in a red can, either) and booze and dirty bathroom sex. And that's in the first few pages, and to some extent, yeah, we've seen coke and orgies before. But by the time you start connecting Lincoln Logs and terrorist activity and the themes of duality and identity, you realize that the stack of pages in your hands, surrounded by the innocence of Braille and the cute readhead on the cover—it's not what you think it is. This is rocket fuel you've got here. This is a young writer without a filter. He's ready to dose you, raw. And better than that—you can tell he's put the work in to produce writing like this. I don't have to ask him, but I know he's got rejection slips stashed somewhere—a writer's badge of honor. I know he rewrites his ass off. I know he doesn't just write or rewrite—he crafts. It's that feeling of being on a roller coaster—I know I'm in the hands of a professional, I know that the roller coaster is well-crafted and safe and the turns and twists and dips are by design—yet you still raise your hands over your head and scream with glee because maybe, just maybe, you're in danger for real.

When I was finished with *Out of Touch* I knew it was a pretty damn good book. It's one I'm going to recommend, one I'm going to remember—two compliments of the highest order that any reader can bestow—but what really excites me is what's next from Mr. Tietz. Where will he go? What happens when his edge gets sharper, his tools more refined, his life experiences and ideas stacking up just so to fuel his next project? And his next one after that? And after that? So he's a guy I'm keeping an eye on. You should too.

And if you are ready—or even if you're not—*Out of Touch* is a must-read.
