

I was born in Leicester in 1971 and have lived there for most of my life apart from the five years I spent in London, doing a bit of uni work and a whole lot of other stuff. I eventually graduated in Politics (I think my professor took pity on me) from Southbank University in 1994. Upon leaving uni I decided that I had to get a job and join the real world. This led to a period in which I did some really boring jobs, like selling random things over the phone, managing the stacking of shelves and letting people into a cinema (all roles which obviously required a deep knowledge of Marxist philosophy).

I came back to Leicester in 1995 with no money and a distant dream about becoming the next Sue Townsend and eventually found myself managing a bar and then a nightclub. Now I'm not saying that it was particularly hard work - it was fun - but at the same time I started to write the story that would become (un)arranged marriage, my first novel for teenagers.

My own influences are wide-ranging. My favourite writers are Roald Dahl, Sue Townsend and crime writers such as James Lee Burke, James Ellroy and Walter Mosely. I'm an avid fan of Reggae Music and artists such as Bob Marley, Burning Spear and Dennis Brown, amongst others, not only have me singing along (badly) but inform much of the way that I look at the World and things in it.