



## I Told You So: The Sequined Sequel to Don't Ask, Do Tell! (Volume 2)

*William Bonzo*

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‘Knowledge is an enemy to bigotry.’ William Bonzo has, as promised, followed his very popular book DON’T ASK, DO TELL – that brave little tome that came into print in October 2010 when the debate about gays in the military was raging, a book of honest appraisal of the situation from the probing and entertaining eyes of a man who had successfully served in the military and dared to give the insider picture. Now he returns with a new book, described as a ‘sequined sequel to Don’t Ask, Do Tell’ that opens even more windows not only to the situation of prejudice present in the military but also to the true facts of what happens while serving as an ‘openly gay’ man in his final tour of duty in the US Navy. It bubbles with Bonzo’s inimitable style of prose and shares a road map of how he adjusted to ‘coming out’ and the manner in which he found happiness at last – living a life of honesty and joy. Bonzo opens his story in Hawaii with a tender reflection at the graveside of his deceased partner and shares that train of memory with us the reader, taking us back to his aborted attempt to resign from the Navy when he landed in New Zealand to discover his tour of duty was extended for two years while the Operation Deep Freeze in Antarctica usurped all available Navy forces: Bonzo would be in charge of the Commissary! He adjusts to the language and culture and climate of New Zealand in a series of hilarious introductions, finds his assigned staff devoted and friendly, and discovers the beauty of the quality of life in his ‘new home’. And then, after his discharge, he elects to stay as long as allowed in his beloved New Zealand. The remainder of the book details his gradual emergence into the gay life in Christchurch, finding a lover, taking on two teenagers as sons – lads without parents who hung out in the local gay bar, his settling in a new apartment in the common part of town and his transition from a life as a closeted gay man to a popular, warmly loving, exceptionally bright and hunky gay man. The friends he makes and the manner in which he conducts his life weds him to the Isle of New Zealand, a place he would always refer to as home despite the fact that his visa was only two years in length. He bids a touching farewell to New Zealand, his partner and his ‘sons’, travels to Australia and other ports where he comes to understand the freedom of being a man no longer needing to hide in the closet. This journey is in many ways a story of how one man ‘came out’ into a world he could barely imagine. And this journey is a rollercoaster ride that eventually returns us to his home in Hawaii – back to the graveside where he starts his memoir, sadly reflecting on the loss of his New Zealand family in the earthquake of February 2011. One of the many aspects of William Bonzo’s writing style is his sprinkling of quotations from a diverse group of people. For instance, while serving in the Navy as an escort to an Admiral he inserts the following quote from Dr. Seuss: ‘Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who mind don’t matter and those who matter don’t mind.’ It is that sort of intelligent humor that provides the glowing sequins of this sequel. William Bonzo has been through the trials of a closeted man in the military and survived, and not only did he survive but he grew in dignity and became an inspiration to all men and women who have found themselves in that prison. But more importantly he has opened that closet door to acceptance and understanding and discovery, sharing the joy of being who he is and finding a world of affection and rewards beyond his expectations. This book is a lighthouse, a tribute, and a nudge in the side as well as a hearty embrace to all his fellow travelers. And as far as this book is concerned, this is one of the most sensitive, hilarious, and warmly pleasurable rides to be released in a long time.



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