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You have written for dramatic and documentary television, with CBC’s *Street Legal*, the medical series *Side Effects* and the script of *Iris Chang: The Rape of Nanking* among your many credits. How difficult (or easy) is it to change genres? Are you still involved in television and script writing projects?

I haven’t found it all that difficult to switch genres. Each genre has its own “rules” that the writer needs to be aware of, but they’re not difficult to learn. In the end it’s all about storytelling. The challenge, no matter the genre, is the same: find a compelling way to tell the story, one that will engage the audience.

I am still working in television. Right now I’m working on a couple of documentaries. I’m also working on a novella for adults, a comedy about an opportunistic widow in search of a rich husband. But most of my energy in the past year has focused on my next YA book, *Face Off*, which will published by Penguin this winter.

How did you conduct your research on these projects?

There wasn’t much research involved in writing for *Street Legal* or *Side Effects*: a little legal research in the former and medical in the latter. However, *Iris Chang: The Rape of Nanking* is about a historical event I knew very little of, and I read a number of history books to make sure I had my facts right. I also interviewed dozens of people, both for background and to determine who we should interview on screen. The film was a docudrama, so I went to China to get a sense of the landscape in order to write the dramatic scenes, and to meet survivors of the massacre, which was a truly amazing experience. If I didn’t know what they were talking about I would have thought they were talking about something that happened last week instead of seventy years ago. The emotions were that raw.

I enjoyed *Breakaway*, and I am looking forward to your upcoming novel *Face Off*. What can you tell us about it?

The protagonist, Alex Petrovic, was born in the fictional Eastern European country of Berovia. At the time, Berovia was at war with its ancient enemy Maldania. The hatred between the two countries was so deep-rooted that when Alex’s mom, a

Berovian, married his Dad, a Maldan, their families disowned them.

When Alex was a year old his father was killed by two Berovian generals who herded him, and 240 other Maldans, into a church and burned it to the ground, part of a campaign of ethnic cleansing to rid the country of all Maldans. The two generals were accused of war crimes by the UN but the Berovian government refused to hand them over. A few months later Alex and his mother came to Vancouver.

When the story starts, Alex is 17 and playing goal for Team British Columbia in an international hockey tournament. When he shakes hands with Team Maldania’s goalie after a game, he finds himself face to face with his identical twin brother, Stefan.

The discovery that he has a twin brother comes as a complete surprise. Alex’s mother never told him about Stefan because she thought he was dead. He had been with Alex’s father the day he was captured by Berovian soldiers and she assumed he had been killed too. Meanwhile, a new government comes to power in Berovia and promises to arrest the two generals who killed Alex’s father. The two men go into hiding and rumours abound that they have escaped to another country. Alex follows the story closely. He desperately wants the men who killed his father to be brought to justice.

After the tournament, Stefan is recruited by a local hockey team and moves in with Alex and his mother. It seems like a fairy tale come true - except everybody doesn’t end up living happily ever after.

Stefan is a better goalie than Alex, and he’s better with the girls. His arrival triggers a severe case of sibling rivalry that causes Alex to lose his mojo. As he struggles to get it back, he and brother suspect that the Stork and the Snowman are in Canada, and find themselves hunting the two war criminals who murdered their father, and ripped their family apart.

Lots of suspense! Can’t wait to read it! Thank you very much. I

