A Review of
Justin Time
A Memoir of Faith and the Fight for Life
Author: Joe Lafferty & Jeff Schober (2019)

Reviewed by Jim Gleason, heart recipient

If you are a sports fan, this is a book for YOU! Joe Lafferty lived through the challenges of cancer at a very young age and instead of defeating him, it created opportunities that filled his young life with a natural speaking skill that led to the public stage in service to others fighting similar life challenges. At these events, Joe spoke alongside many sports celebrities who were generously giving of their own time supporting causes that crossed their mutual paths admiring his young skills. These resulted in lifelong friendships that are celebrated in this book, an amazing testament to the resilience that will inspire the reader as it did this reviewer in following his growth from youth through adult years with its many medical challenges that include cancer, diabetes, loss of an eye, pulmonary embolism, kidney failure, heart valve replacement and multiple organ transplantation (“Whew!”). Each battle is described with Joe’s honest revealing transparency of ups and downs, both emotionally and physically, that will serve as an inspiration to any reader, but especially those facing their own health/life battles. By partnering with Jeff Schober in creating this book, together they have created a unique opportunity to understand the resilience of the human spirit when faced with what often seem like unsurmountable odds.

As a reviewer of organ transplant and organ donation books, my focus was on the final chapters where Joe shares what it was like undergoing a kidney and pancreas transplant, an event that brought with it some extra unanticipated complexities, each overcome with the support of prayer, family support and great medical teams. Those prayers came in his adult life discovering faith through loving friends who shared their own Christian faith in God and Jesus. That evolution of belief is described interwoven with his health battles, eventually resulting in a discovery of human love that leads to marriage and happiness in new family life. Joe in partnership with co-author, Jeff Schober, shares the details of his transplant journey, even down to the lifelong regimen of drugs that protect his new organs.

Eventually Joe connects with his donor family which adds yet another dimension to his story and the reader’s understanding of both sides of the organ donation and organ transplant process at its most human level of loss and anonymous giving life to a stranger. This book has several chapters written from the perspective of various players in Joe’s life story, many friends and well-known sports stars, but also from the organ donor’s family, making this book a unique insight to Joe’s life through the eyes of others. Be prepared to see a picture of Justin Boyer, a handsome smiling young man who gave others life in his own tragic death, with his mantra of LIVE – LOVE – LAUGH – SMILE that will hopefully encourage the reader to take personal action and register as an organ donor following Justin’s example, offering life as Justin did for Joe, when one no longer needs their organs. As we often say, “There is no question that you will eventually be
an organ donor. The question is are you going to donate to the ground or to save someone’s life?” Think about it, then act!

Joe Lafferty lives a life of service and inspiration and through his example of not just surviving but thriving, overcoming huge challenges and now sharing his story in this unique book co-authored with Jeff Schober, he will both entertain and touch the lives of many more in the years to come.

“Thank you, Joe, for letting us into your life in this unique sharing.”

Note: Justin Time is available in various formats at Amazon.com

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Brief reviewer bio:
Jim Gleason, receiving his own heart transplant Oct. ’94, retired after 37 years in the computer industry with Unisys Corporation in 2005. He is a volunteer with The Gift of Life Donor Program in Philadelphia, a past national board member with UNOS as well as president of TRIO (Transplant Recipients International Organization) where he maintains a list of reviewed transplant related books on TRIO’s web site http://TRIOweb.org under menu item RESOURCES. Jim is a nationally recognized speaker with over 500 events in his speaking resume and an author himself. His own book, A Gift from the Heart, is offered free in thanks to his donor family and can be viewed or downloaded online at http://gleasonjim.com