Jim J. Bullock Interview on Queerty

July 14, 2009 By Oriol R. Gutierrez Jr.

The LGBT blog Queerty recently interviewed 1980s TV star Jim J. Bullock, a.k.a. Monroe from the sitcom *Too Close for Comfort*.

The bulk of the interview sets up the premise that Bullock set the stage for openly gay TV characters in the 1990s. However, the interview also explores some HIV/AIDS themes.

Bullock is now open about being both gay and HIV positive. That wasn't always true.

He came out as gay on *The Joan Rivers Show* in 1990, but he inadvertently was "half-outed" about his HIV status.

Here's an excerpt from the interview:

"Even years after the show ended, Evangelicals criticized Tammy for co-hosting The Jim J. and Tammy Faye Show with a gay man -- especially when Jim came out as HIV-positive. His status was half-outed, really. In preparation for the 1997 AIDS ride, Jim sent a sponsorship letter to possible donors. He mentioned that in addition to riding in memory of his deceased partner, he was riding for his friends living with HIV/AIDS and that he, too, was living with the disease. A few days later Jim was awakened by knocking at his door. It was a

tabloid reporter inquiring about his HIV status."

I remember as a teenager watching Bullock on *Too Close for Comfort*. I realized that he (or at least his character) was gay. It was heartening for me to see a gay man on TV back then. We owe Bullock some amount of thanks for that.

Click here to read the complete interview.

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