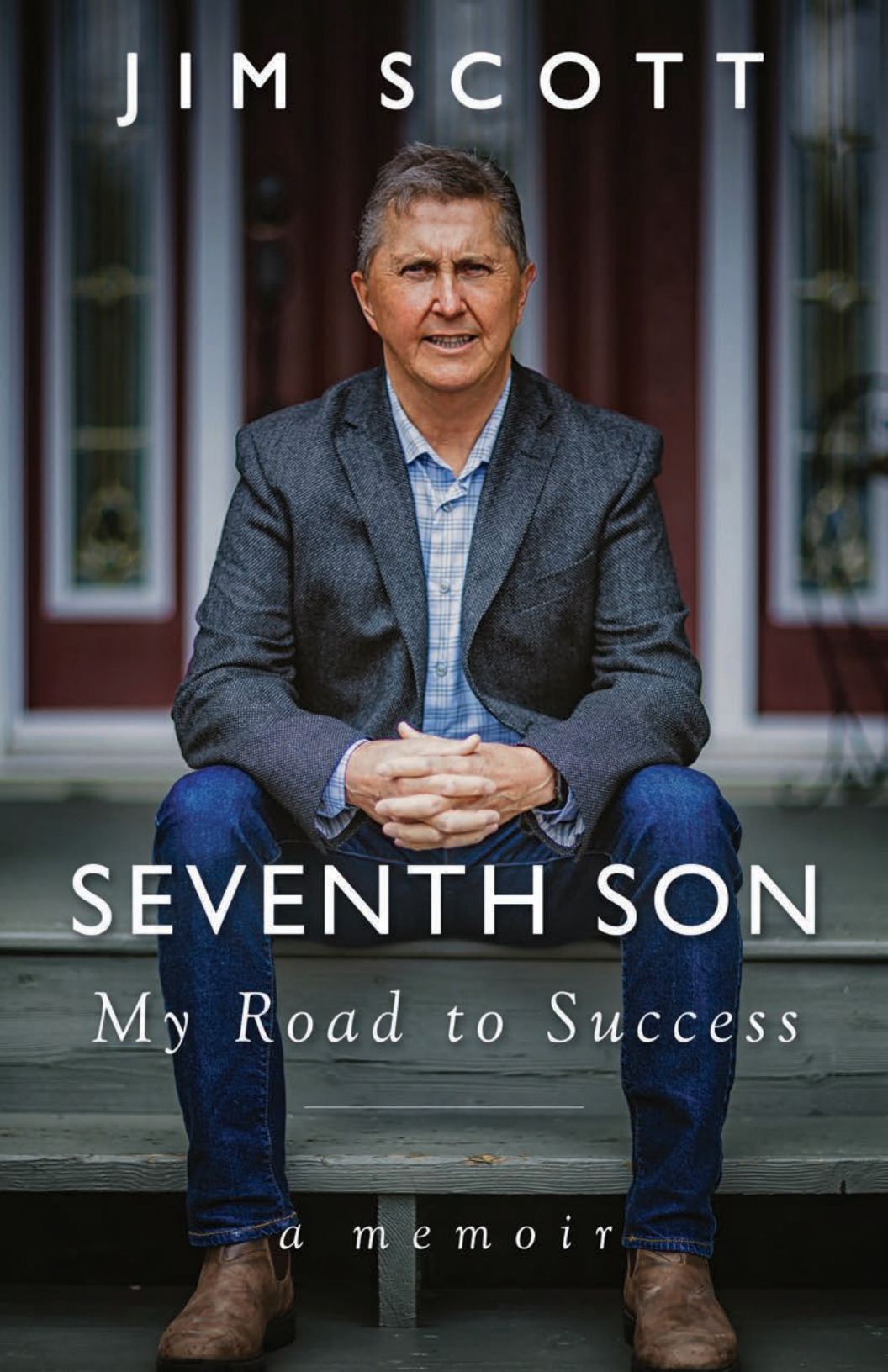


A photograph of a middle-aged man with grey hair, wearing a grey blazer over a blue and white plaid shirt, blue jeans, and brown leather boots. He is sitting on a wooden bench with his hands clasped in his lap. Behind him is a red building with white trim and windows. The text "JIM SCOTT" is at the top, "SEVENTH SON" is in the middle, "My Road to Success" is below that, and "a memoir" is at the bottom.

JIM SCOTT

SEVENTH SON

My Road to Success

a memoir

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SEVENTH SON

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SEVENTH SON

My Road to Success

a memoir

JIM SCOTT

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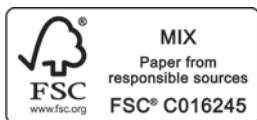
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Dedicated to my parents,
Victor and Amy Scott

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Seventh Son

“Remember, because you are the seventh son, you are going to be incredibly lucky in many things,” my father said one day, doing what he always did, imparting wisdom in some fashion. Dad talked to me a lot. He felt that it was a father’s job, I suppose, to share what he’d learned, but this was new.

“What do you mean?” I asked.

“I mean, the world will be at your feet, and you can be anything you want.” I must have looked confused, so he kept on talking. “There is an old Celtic fable about what it means to be a seventh son. Your mother has had twelve children. The first four were girls, but then she had eight boys in a row, and you’re the seventh of them. That makes you the seventh son, and in the lore, the seventh son in a consecutive line of sons is said to be gifted. They are known to have healing powers, and good fortune follows them.”

Wow, I thought.

A few weeks later, a second event gave me insight into my

potential for good fortune, occult abilities, and the eventual success my father attributed to my birth order in the family.

“Get ready, I want you to meet someone,” Dad said. It was his friend’s turn to host the weekly Saturday ritual of soup, beer, and conversation. Dad never invited us kids to go, so I was quite excited. I felt proud and special as we walked to the back of his buddy’s house to an old shed. A man I’d never met stood and greeted Dad with a broad smile.

“This is Martin,” Dad said. “Martin, this is my son, Jim. Now, you sit here and talk to Martin. I’ll be over there on the patio.”

Awkward, I sized up the man. He was a stocky man who dressed like every other man around that time, with a green shirt, pants, and workboots. He seemed pleasant enough and peered at me as though he had been expecting me.

When he reached out, I took his large hand, as expected, and he shook mine heartily. I felt a strange sensation as our palms met. Confused, I let go. With a swoop of his other hand, he indicated that I should take a seat on a large stump as he sat back down. I settled in for a while, a bit nervous.

“I’m the seventh son of a seventh son,” he said. “What do you know about being a seventh son, Jim?”

“Only what Dad told me,” I replied. “It means I’ll have success.” *The seventh son of a seventh son?* I thought. *Two times over? That’s got to be impossible.*

“Your dad is somewhat right, but I’ll explain a little more. Also, so that you know, what we talk about today, you most likely won’t remember this meeting for several years, but in time the memory will come back to you.”

Why tell me if I’ll just forget? Before I could question him, he continued.

“When I was a child, I too was taken to another seventh son, just like you are here with me today, to help me understand

things. I'm going to explain to you something I refer to as our déjà vu moments, among other things. And to let you know that when these strange things happen, there is no reason to be afraid."

Déjà vu? I'd never heard that phrase before. I stared at him.

"Let's shake hands again," he said. I reached out, and as our hands met, I felt that strange sensation again.

"You are indeed a seventh son," Martin said. "Did you feel that?"

"Yes," I replied, nodding, although I was becoming more baffled by the minute.

"I can feel your power, and what you feel is mine. In your lifetime you will meet people like me, and most times you will seek each other out, and whenever you shake hands, you will both know. It's hard to explain, but it will happen. Just like it did then."

I'm sure my eyes were as broad as dinner plates, but there was more to come.

"We all have certain powers, but I will show you one of many things that tells us apart from other people." Martin leaned behind him and picked up an old tobacco can, flipped off the hole-pierced lid, and revealed several large worms.

Are we going fishing? I thought.

No such luck. Instead, he picked up one of the wriggling worms and placed it in his palm. "Watch," he said.

The worm curled in his palm like any other worm would before it began to turn a pure white. As it changed before my eyes, he dropped it to the ground. I looked where it landed and saw the colour fill its body again. Then the poor creature moved into the grass.

"I didn't want to let it die to make the point, because if I let it stay in my hand, it *will* die," he said. "Here, you try."

I put out my hand and flipped my palm up. I didn't mind worms. I was an eight-year-old boy, after all. He dropped the

lucky candidate from inside the baccy can onto my flattened palm, and the moment he did, the worm curled and stopped moving. As soon as it stilled, I jumped off the stump as though bitten and dropped it.

Martin laughed. I looked over at Dad on the patio. He waved and smiled.

"Sit down, Jim," Martin said in a kind voice.

I did, somewhat shaken but very curious.

"That's just a demonstration of a little of your power, and I know that's kind of scary, but understand that you have some healing power, too, so if someone is sick, you might be able to ease their pain, but not all seventh sons have this power. I'm telling you so that you know it's possible. As a seventh son of a seventh son, I have it. Now, let's talk about those sorts of, I don't know, reverse déjà vu moments you'll get."

I listened intently. This really piqued my curiosity.

"Déjà vu is a French term that means you see something that feels familiar, as if you have seen it before. The best way I can explain it is to imagine seeing a car coming down the road, and as you see it, you get this intense feeling that you already saw it coming down the road before, and you know it. So, as a seventh son, you will also experience the complete reverse of that. You will see something that hasn't yet happened, as though it has. A premonition. And it will unfold exactly as you see it," he said.

I had time to ponder that for just a moment before he was on to another topic.

"You will develop other powers that will help you in life, like having feelings about things you see, or that happen, that you already know about. Some call this sixth sense or gut instinct, but yours will be *very* strong. You will know what to do in these situations."

That's a good thing, then, I thought.

“Can I see your palm?”

I reached out my hand yet again, but this time, instead of shaking it, he flipped it bottom up and stared.

“Your lifeline is very long,” he said after a few moments. “This means you will have a long life.” He noticed that I had three warts on my hands. He stepped away from the stump and said, “Stay there, I have to get something.”

Upon his return, he had a piece of grey wool. He asked to look at my right hand first and saw two warts. Tying a knot in the wool, he rubbed it on the first and did the same for the second. He then asked for my left hand, seeing only one wart. Again he tied a knot and rubbed it on the wart.

“Put this in your pocket. Forget about the warts. They will disappear in a few days.”

Every time he said something new, I had more questions than answers. I didn’t ask any, though, too enthralled by his words to interrupt.

“You will be very lucky in many things, and your life will be good overall.” Finished, he sat back and looked at me, as if waiting for my reaction.

“Thank you,” I said.

I absorbed what he said and left that day full of questions, but just as he predicted, I put it out of my mind for a long time, the entire encounter forgotten, until it came back to me years later in a waterfall rush of memory.

A few weeks after that meeting, one Saturday morning I awoke and noticed my warts were all gone. I raced down to tell Mom and Dad. I was astonished. How had Martin done this?

2

Hot Soup and Stories

I was born on March 19, 1962, to Clarence Victor Scott and Amy Lucretia Lander. My life began much like that of any Canadian kid in a blue-collar family from a one-industry town. Windsor, Newfoundland and Labrador, is a small Central Newfoundland community that boasted a thriving logging industry, a successful paper mill in Grand Falls across the tracks, and a healthy rivalry that exists even though the towns have long been folded into one, Grand Falls–Windsor, hyphenated after a reluctant courtship and marriage.

There, amidst the bustle, dropped down on a street named Coronation— a town named Windsor paid homage to the monarchy in myriad ways—was a saltbox-style house with a large Newfoundland kitchen. The weekdays whirled by in our home like the scene out of the windows of the long retired old provincial train nicknamed the Newfie Bullet.

Mom was married three times, Dad twice. From all those marriages, I had eleven living older siblings, three from Dad's

marriage and eight from Mom's marriages, not including two sisters who died before my birth. Dad's children from his first marriage, Marie, Lillian, and Vic Jr., were grown and out on their own by the time I came along, as were Mom's children from her first marriage, Vera, Ruth and Frank. Mom lost two girls prior to Frank's birth. My siblings from her second marriage were Roland, Ralph, Robert, and John.

Mom and Dad had three children together—me, my brother Tony, two years my senior, and Leonard, four years younger than me. While I was growing up in the late 1960s, Dad, Mom, Roland, Ralph, Bob, John, Tony, and I were living in the house.

On Saturday afternoons, the frantic rhythm of the week changed. The pop, hiss of a bottle of beer opening and the mouth-watering smell of hot soup were the setting when the menfolk, weary from their jobs and looking for social interaction, gathered in somebody's kitchen.

One particular weekend at our house sticks out in my mind. It was my father's turn to host the b'ys to drink and yarn. Saturday was soup day all over the province, and Mom's specialty was pea soup. I can smell it now, the aroma from the rich, thick, bubbling broth filling the air, as the men yarned and my mother fussed about like mothers of a certain time and place did.

Five men walked into our house that day. There was Marty Cave, a quiet, small-framed, and well-respected man, with dress pants and a necktie and pullover sweater and a quiet, courteous voice. My uncle Charlie strolled in after him, towering over us all at six-two, tieless, sporting dress pants and shirt. Cam Paddock was the third. He was a veteran air force man from World War II, a tall fellow with a great mane of hair combed back, lacquered into submission with Brylcreem; he wore a khaki brown shirt and pants to match. The fourth was Joe Kelly, a short, stocky man, bald like my father. He and Dad wore the

same green work pants and shirt. Joe could have passed for his brother, and they were best friends, both with their large bellies and shared love of drinking and smoking.

The fifth man that weekend was a stranger to me. His name was Alphonsus Keefe—Phonse to everybody who knew him. He too was tall, a large-built man, and oddly, he wore a silver chain that led from his belt to his back pocket. Despite how dressed up the other men were, he was far more dapper. He had a necktie and a wool vest over his starched dress shirt and matching dress pants. His hair was silver, his face clean-shaven. Old Spice cologne wafted from him.

This was a time when men wore fedoras and smoked in houses. I once told my much-older brother Roland that I was twenty-five before I recognized him. The cloud of smoke was so thick in our kitchen the times we'd met when I was a boy, and he was a young man. I didn't know this man—Phonse— but I was determined to change that.

My uncle John had once quipped he knew the top lawyer in Newfoundland, and he wasn't sure who asked more questions, me or the lawyer. I couldn't argue. I was a curious boy, and my reputation in the family for my incessant questions served me well. That fateful day, poor Phonse bore the brunt of my rampant curiosity.

"Why do you have a chain on your wallet?"

He let out a great belly laugh, reached around, and removed this long wallet from his back pocket. He held it out for me to see.

"He has a lot to lose," one of the other four men joked. Everybody laughed.

"Phonse owns the corner store, Keefe's," Dad answered, referring to a local shop that I often visited. I'd seen an older lady serving and guessed she was his wife.

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