



## As The Author Learns

*Bits and Tidbits about the Publishing Process  
from J L Wilson, soon-to-be published author*

### What's Happening?

I have a title! The Pig Book has its real name, and it is ... <drum roll, please> ...

*Candy, Corpses, and Classified Ads*

Yea! Finally. I've been waiting for a few months for that. Now I can start planning some ad campaigns. And I was able to change my Brownie book (*The Readjustment Blues*) to match, so it is now: <drum roll again>:

*Brownies, Bodies, and Breaking the Code*

The Brownie Book and the Pig Book have a similar 'feel'. Both are first-person narration and both are a bit lighter in tone than my other suspense books. I hope to follow these sales with the sales of *Porno, PhDs and Premeditated Murder* and *Autographs, Abductions, and A-List Authors*. Stay tuned and I'll let you know what happens!

Speaking of which... I have a release date for Max and Layla (*If Not For You*): December 27. Yeah, I know – it may not be the best time for a book release. Ah, what the heck. I'm not going to sweat it. I'm hoping by then I will have a devoted following and they'll ignore the Christmas holidays to rush out and download my book. I can hope, right?



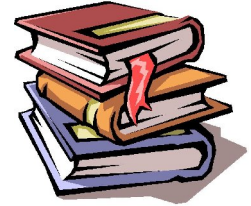
In the meantime, I am deep into my John Dillinger book, set in 1934 St. Paul. I've found a ton of information about the Depression and a few books that show the city as it was back then. So I feel like I'm getting a feel for the period and can finally sit down and start churning out the story (she said hopefully).

See my web site (<http://www.jayellwilson.com/>) for excerpts and the most up-to-the-minute information or my blog at <http://jlwblog.blogspot.com> where I share details about my glamorous and exciting life (ha!).

I've also added a link to my past issues of my newsletters. Feel free to share my links with your friends – the more the merrier!

## All About Blurbing

How do you reduce a 90,000-word book to two paragraphs, 250 words at the most? Even harder, how do you reduce it to two sentences?



What will make a reader pick up my book, read it, and say, “Yes! I want to add this one to my stack! And it’s going to the top of the heap!”

It’s all about the blurb. Believe it or not, I’ve had classes in blurbing (online classes, that is.) I’ve also had classes in ‘tagging’. That’s the art of coming up with 2-3 sentences that describe your book, hook the reader, sound catchy, and can be easily remembered.

There’s no hard and fast rule on how to do this, but here’s how I go about it. First I try to find one or two words that describe the hero and heroine: ‘ambitious workaholic CEO’, ‘an uptight Suit from TieLand’, ‘an ex-hippy war protestor’ or ‘overly-curious software tester’. I want a little phrase that will sum up my characters quickly. I have lists of adjectives that I’ve gleaned from various sources, as well as descriptive phrases for professions that I can use to help prod my brain.

Then I look for the hook: what brought them together? What’s keeping them together? What’s keeping them apart? I mean, if they meet, fall in love, and ride off into the sunset together, there’s no book, right? So what’s the conflict? I try to come up with snippets of text that I can weave together somehow.



...‘a letter gone astray,’ ‘stock manipulation and kidnapping,’ ‘a successful merger,’ ‘a computer dating service,’ ‘a potential match who won’t take NO for an answer’, ‘potential terrorist plot’. These are all pieces of the story. I don’t want a lot of details and I don’t want to give away WhoDunIt, but I want to give a sense of the book.

Now I have my snips and I have to try to fit them all together.

*Max Lerner had it all – a successful business, occasional women, and a high-tech, high profile lifestyle. Nothing was missing in Max's life until he met Layla Whitford.*

*Layla had rebounded from her divorce to a workaholic businessman and started a new life in the Twin Cities, testing software for a small computer company. When she got a threatening letter, she turned it over to the police. But the letter she got was meant for Max, an uptight businessman who took exception to Layla's handling of his mail.*

*When Max meets Layla she turns his world upside down and the fireworks between them almost makes him lose sight of the deal he's been working on for weeks. Then Layla is kidnapped, and it isn't about business anymore. It's about the safety of this crazy woman he's fallen in love with. Max and his friends have to find Layla, shore up the merger, squash rumors of software piracy, and find those responsible for this chaos – and do it all in a matter of hours.*

*If they can accomplish all that, surely Max and Layla can find a way for an ex-hippy war protestor to make a life with a business-driven CEO...can't they?*

Okay, there's my draft. I play with it some more, I tweak it, I change some words around. Then I send it to my editor and she has a go at it and starts changing it. See the finished version at <http://www.jayellwilson.com/taglayla.htm>.



As for the tagline – it's the same process: find those phrases and see what you can string together in one or two sentences. I tend to work on these at the same time so I can use pieces from each in the other. I often pick at it as I write the story so it doesn't slap me in the face when I'm up against a deadline. Blurbing and tagging require a whole different mindset than plotting and writing, so I try to set aside a certain amount of time to give my brain a chance to adjust.

### *News from the Promo Front*



I've teamed up with some other authors at my publisher and we're taking out ads in one of the Big Trade Magazines. There are six or so of us who will split the cost of a color ad in one of the biggest magazines devoted to reviews of romance books (and this magazine is HUGE). The ad is pricy but we'll split the cost. These are all authors who have published before, so I'm hoping some of their 'press' will rub off on me.

I've also taken the plunge and am signing up for 'Featured Author' slots at some online review sites. These web sites are enormously popular with readers. A lot of authors have contests there ('win a free book' kind of thing) and they have online author-reader chats, some in real time (going into a 'chat' room and typing furiously) or in an online group where a 'chat' takes place all day (yikes. I'm not sure I'm up to that much schmoozing).

These featured author gigs can last for a month, six months, or a year. The year is the better bargain, \$\$-wise, so I signed up for a couple of those (they're relatively inexpensive). I figured I've got so many books coming out the year-thing might be the smart way to go. These 'package deals' come with planned chats, banner spots

(places on the web site where my ads run) and (best of all to me) the web site runs contests since I am totally clueless on that whole aspect of promo.

### What's Next?

Sleuthfest!! Yep, I'm getting ready to go to Miami Beach to participate in Sleuthfest. For details, see <http://www.mwa-florida.org/sleuthfest.htm> for info. Murder on the Beach—what could be more fun?



At this conference I'm *finally* going to meet one of my critique partners. Yes, that's right – Maggie and I have been critiquing together for a couple of years and we've never met in person. She lives in Georgia now and hasn't gotten to any other conferences where I've been able to attend. But she's coming to SF, so we'll finally get a chance to talk in person, instead of by email. Looking forward to it!

And remember that Important Author I didn't recognize at the last conference? The one where I put my foot in my mouth and asked, "Oh, are you published?" I got a nice email from her and she said she's looking forward to chatting with me at Sleuthfest because she'll be there.

This is a small conference (a couple of hundred people) and the speakers are somewhat big in the mystery world (Linda Fairstein and Rene Balcer are giving keynotes speeches. LF is a best-selling thriller writer and RB is the producer of the Law & Order TV series).

My in-town critique partner, Kathy, and I are arriving on Wednesday so we'll have time to scope the place out and get ready for "Third Degree Thursday" in which we can participate in various in-depth classes. I'm hoping to focus on marketing at this one, as well as craft ("Criminal Procedure – From Arrest to Verdict" sounds intriguing). And let's not forget the Murder on the Beach bookstore, the "field trip" to South Beach, and the Saturday night poolside cocktail party.

Damn. I'd better go shopping. Not sure if I have the right clothes for this venue. I'm a denim and T-shirt kinda person.

Sears, here I come!

