



As The Author Learns

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

What's Happening?

It's got to be spring soon, doesn't it? That's why I'm using a green theme this month. I'm hoping for some spring!

Spring, of course, means we're one month closer to a release date for my books. And spring reminds me of flowers, and flowers remind me of: The Wild Rose Press, who bought a book! Yes, you read that right – I have now signed five (5) contracts! Let's see, that's 5 contracts in 5 months. Hmm. Is this a trend? And I have one contract pending. My streak continues!

The Wild Rose Press (<http://www.thewildrosepress.com>) is a small publisher who publishes books first in e-format then 8 weeks later makes the books available on Amazon and through their own web site. They bought *The Readjustment Blues* (or as it's known in my critique group: The Brownie Book). It's the story of a woman who brings brownies to the company potluck and somebody dies right after eating them. Was it poison? Or is it a terrorist plot? Read the book and find out!



I don't have a release date for it but I'll begin edits in late April. My release date for *Forgiveness*, the first book in my History Patrol series, is September 20 and I think my release date for *If Not For You* (my second romantic suspense with Cerridwen) will be in December, with two more out next year. And let's not forget the Pig Book, which will be out in November, coming in print next year sometime.

See my web site (<http://www.jayellwilson.com>) for excerpts and the most up-to-the-minute information or my blog at <http://jlblog.blogspot.com> where I moan and groan about daily life.

Exciting E-Publishing News!

My main publisher, Cerridwen, has announced exciting plans to put ALL books into print sooner, rather than later. This is similar to what Wild Rose is doing and others. The books will be available in two ways: some will be P.O.D. and others will be distributed, through regular channels, to bookstores.

P.O.D. What is it? It's *Print On Demand*. This is a huge money-saver for publishers. Instead of ordering a print run of, say, 1000 books, they have books printed as

needed, as they're ordered at Amazon or from their web site. The reason this is such big news for me is that prior to this, Cerridwen did not always send books from e-format to print in a timely way. They had to weigh which books might do best in a print market, etc.

But they've made arrangements to change all that and have all books go into print, and they'll reserve distribution for those books which sell the strongest (so if you spread the word about my books, I've got a good chance of showing up in a bookstore near you ☺). This means that you'll all be able to order my books in print format very quickly after they've come out in e-format. Man, oh man, am I excited!



What's Involved in Prepping a Book for Release?

I've been involved in a lot of final release preparation, so I thought you might be curious about what's involved. It's very time-consuming, but also fun. Here's a breakdown of how it goes, with a rough timeline. Note that this doesn't apply to every book, but it's sort of an average, or so I'm finding.

By the way, I can skip the initial step now: querying the publisher and submitting sample chapters. I don't have to query any more. My editor has told me she wants to see anything I write, so I get to save time on that step, at least.

Before even submitting the manuscript for the first reading, I've verified that I'm conforming to the publisher's style ("one space between sentences"; "proper trademark attribution"; "Chicago Manual of Style regarding punctuation"). All publishers have *slightly* different styles, so it's tricky. I've also gone through the manuscript and checked for things like: do events occur on the right days? (I can't tell you how many times I've changed a timeline in a book, and found that the body was discovered on Tuesday when the murder happened on a Wednesday just because I didn't get the right day when I was doing my final rewrite). I check hair color, eye color, height, weight, car color, and other picky details. I usually keep a pad of paper nearby to jot down notes. I also double-check all my facts (gun caliber, effect of hypothermia, hospital protocols, and things like that.)



Then I send it to my editor. She and I may go back and forth with a few changes, but then let's say she's decided she wants it. She gives me a contract, and I've signed and returned it so I am now on a schedule and a countdown since editors have X amount of time from when the contract is received until it has to be



submitted to Final Line Editors (FLE). In the first week or two after my contract has been returned, I have to submit my request for cover art, submit my 'blurb' (the text that goes on the back of the book) and other promo information. I'll discuss those in another newsletter, maybe. There's a whole art to creating blurbs, cover art, and taglines (those snappy little phrases you see on the cover of books).

So let's say I've submitted all that. Now my editor and I get down to Real Edits. She provides me with comments about the book and makes suggestions on changes: "I wasn't sure why he said that here: how did he know that Penelope hurt her foot - he wasn't there when she did it. You need to add info about how he knew that." You know - consistency things that I missed on my edit.

She provides me with a detailed memo about what to change. Sometimes the memo can be 4-6 pages long with overall changes she'd like to see ("I think you need to play up how dangerous it is to be chasing this criminal. I'm not getting a real sense of danger"). Sometimes it's small ("I think Harry should be more annoyed in this chapter, he's really angry, isn't it?")

Then she also goes through the manuscript and puts in review comments using a function in the word processor so I can easily see all the changes. Often these are minor things, like comma deletions, comma insertions, word changes, and so on. I then go through the manuscript and 'approve' or 'reject' her changes. Most of the changes are ones I approve, but some of them we quibble about.

I've worked with two editors so far, and I've had a few tussles with one of them. But she's always improved my manuscripts a LOT by fussing about a few points. Sometimes it's painful (see the picture of the guy with the knife - I *hate* cutting scenes) but sometimes it's just necessary.

Okay, I go through the version my editor sends back to me and I make all the suggested changes OR I tell her why I can't. We tussle back and forth then I send it off to her. She double-checks it all then it's off to FLE (Final Line Editing).



The folks there review it yet again and check that we've conformed to style, there are no typos, we've correctly attributed trademarks, and so on. This can take a few months (they've got a full schedule, too). And then - and only then - is it final.

The rewrite process can take as long as a month or two, but usually I've worked out the problems before I send it to her, so she and I wrap it up in a week or so. And I drop everything I'm doing and work on the edits when she hands them to

me, because I know we're all (the editor, the art guys, the final line editors, the publisher) on a schedule.

I'll talk next month about blurbing, tagging, and excerpting, oh my! That's another part of the process and is a whole topic unto itself.

A Request to My Older Readers

I know – age is relative, right? But this is a request to those of you who remember the Great Depression. My next History Patrol book is set in 1934 St. Paul (when John Dillinger came to town). I'd like to get your impressions of what it was like during the Depression – the books I'm reading about St. Paul of that time make it sound like nothing much was out of whack.



Was it a constant worry for you? What did people talk about? Was there a catchphrase that people used? Do you remember reading about or hearing about the Bonus Army March on Washington in 1932? What about the drought of 1934? Were you aware of how horrible it was and the effect it was having on the country? Did people talk about the Great War and its effect on young people? Do you remember the repeal of Prohibition in 1933? What effect did that have on society? Did everyone speculate about Roosevelt and how effective his programs would be?

Everything I'm reading now has the benefit of hindsight (which as we all know, is always 20-20). If you could, just drop me a line (or send an email) and tell me what you remember about those times. I'd like to incorporate some thoughts and feelings from the people who actually lived through it.

What's Next?

The Big Promo Push is coming in April. I made a timeline of 'when to do what' and in April I can start to promote the book that comes out in late June. I don't want to promo too far in advance, but I'll be lurking on some chat loops, buying a few banner ads, and generally making my presence felt on the online promo scene. In May I'll really get down to business.



And, of course, I'm writing. I'm working on my time travel book (see above) and also sketching out another romantic suspense book. Plus I'm webmistress for my local RWA chapter's web site and their newsletter editor. So I'm busy.

And having fun.