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How to Get a Job in Book Publishing

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How to Get a Job in Book Publishing

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the degree of

Master of Arts
in
English
Professional Writing

By

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Abstract

There are many different doorways into the world of book publishing and it can be challenging, but there are choices that can make it easier. Aspiring publishers often have a hard time breaking into this world because they have no guide. This thesis will be a guide to traversing the different avenues into the world of publishing. Prospective publishers, editors, and writers will be provided with a landscape of what it's like to work in book publishing. It will also cover the two different ways that people become publishers, an overview of the basic requirements that publishing houses look for in potential employees, and the basic process of what publishers do.

Keywords: publishing, books, interviews, jobs, authors, publishers, agents, diversity

Introduction

At every stage of my education, high school, undergraduate, and graduate school, there was inevitably a time when someone asked the dreaded question: *what are your plans after school?* Oftentimes, I'm with my friends who have an idea about what they want to do after graduation: editing medical journals, being a teacher, or becoming an editor for sci-fi and fantasy novels. There are times, even now, when I don't know how to answer *that* question. As I have grown I have had more experiences, such as the publishing lab I had with Professor Abram Himmelstein where we got to help choose a manuscript to publish, and my current internship that I'm doing with Chin Music Press where I've gotten to help promote their social media. I've found myself drawn to the idea of working in the book trade: possibly writing, if I were able to find the courage and hone my skills, but I definitely want to help others publish their work. As a grad student, I've received mixed reactions to the assertion that I plan to go into publishing. The most common response I get: *what is a Publisher?* A better question might be, *what does a publisher do?*

There is no easy answer to either of those questions. I would typically say "They make books," but the truth is significantly different depending on how you enter into the world of publishing. The basics of what a publisher does has everything to do with the kind of publishing house they work in. Whether it's a big-name publishing company, like Penguin Random House, or a smaller publishing company, like University of New Orleans Press, there are still basic things that every publisher has to do. Joe Biel breaks down the process in his book, *A People's Guide to Publishing: Build a Successful, Sustainable, Meaningful, Book Business From the Ground Up*, "As a publisher, you will

solicit books from authors, read submissions, work with authors to produce the best book possible, pay for and coordinate the manufacturing of books, and work hard to market, sell, and distribute those books as far and wide as possible” (Biel 17). In order to accomplish these tasks, there are various roles that publisher Biel describes: Marketing and Development, Editing, Production, Publicity, and Sales and Distribution. This isn’t something people can usually do on their own, although it’s been done before. Many publishing companies opt to outsource portions of the work in order to keep costs low for their companies and to expedite the process.

Through interviewing professionals in the field, and my own research, I’ve found that there are several ways to enter into the world of publishing, and I’ve concluded it’s best to split these paths into two different sections: Trade Publishers and Entrepreneur Publishers. First, though, I’d like to explain the five sections of the thesis: Landscape and Diversity, What All Publisher Do, Writers Who Publish Their Own Work, Trade Publishing, and Entrepreneur Publishers.

One caveat of the publishing industry is the severe lack of diversity. In my section on **Landscape and Diversity**, I will demonstrate how it’s an industry that was made by and large by white men for white people. No matter the genre of the text, the editor, the publisher, or the author, the percentages of Caucasian people vs. people of color working throughout this industry is far from being truly representative of the mix of the American citizenry. The disparity has made progress difficult for people of color, though there is considerable push back and opportunity at this moment as publishers have been put on notice that the status quo is unacceptable. In addition, multicultural literature has proven itself in terms of sales and audience. However, the higher up in the industry we look, the

more likely it is to see more white males, while the lower rungs are beginning to look more like America as a whole.

Next, I will cover **What All Publishers Do: The Editing, Printing and Marketing of Books**. After you have found a manuscript you want to publish, you then must start the editing process. Here, a few different people are involved: the editor, the publisher, and the author. They work through the manuscript in order to improve the writing and maintain and strengthen (or moderate) the voice of the author.

Then, you hire graphic designers in order to design the cover, choose the font and the way your book will look when it is finally printed. Every page costs money to print, so you have to be cost effective. It's important to know how books are created and how to go about deciding on the best printing company for yourself and your author. In this case, there are many printers in North America, Europe, and Asia, each with strengths and weaknesses for the publisher.

The next section will focus on **Writers Who Publish Their Own Work**, where I will analyze what publishers aren't able to do for authors. This path would be more for writers and not publishers. "Why would you write about writers publishing their own work if it has nothing to do with being an actual publisher?" you may be asking. As an aspiring publisher, you must sell yourself to the writers of the world to come get their book published by you. In order to be able to offer a writer something they can't do on their own, you must understand what they are able to accomplish without a publisher.

Now that we've effectively previewed what a publisher does and doesn't do let's cover how to enter this profession. The first path I'm examining is **Trade Publishing**, the most well-known publishing companies occupy this path. Some are a part of the "Big

Five,” a group of the oldest and most prosperous set of publishing houses in New York while other smaller presses exist throughout the country. In order to join a publishing house like this, you need experience, credentials, and adaptability—or pull. As a college student, this is hard to come by when you’ve spent most of your time trying to get the education everyone tells you is the most important thing you need. Often, the best way to get that experience is to get an internship with the company you want to join, or even one that publishes similar books to what you may want to publish in the future.

The second path is **Entrepreneur Publishers**. This path is for people with a passion for books; people that want to be a part of creating art through the printed word. These kinds of publishers aren’t trying to publish their own work, but the work of others. This is one of the toughest ways to become a publisher because it requires that you either already have or are willing to learn different talents in starting and running your business. Unless you know someone that can guide you in the creation of your own publishing company, it might feel like you’re in a rowboat without a paddle. Although there are plenty of people who have prospered on this path, there are many more who have only debts and a stack of unsold books in their closet to show for the experience.

Landscape & Diversity

Most professionals will break publishing into three different types: Traditional, Self-Publishing, and Hybrid Publishing, and then sub-categories: Trade Publishing, Children and Young Adult Publishing, Academic Publishing, Vanity Publishing, Independent Publishing, Boutique Publishing, and Electronic Publishing. Some of these

avenues sound very similar to each other, but there are actually slight differences between them.

Traditional Publishing is a general term and several of the publishing categories fall under it, but its meaning is that the publisher actually handles all aspects of the book, instead of outsourcing things. The first sub-category that is related to **Traditional Publishing** is **Trade Publishing**. This is dominated by the “Big Five” publishing companies that consist of Penguin Random House, Simon & Schuster, Macmillan Publishers, Harper Collins, and Hachette Livre. The books in this section of publishing are usually for the general reading market and wider public consumption, and take up more than half of the English language book market (Ribbonfish, “A Short Guide to the Different Types of Publishing”). Smaller publishers will often partner with one of the “Big Five” in order to increase their distribution and promotion. Trade Publishers will try to acquire the rights to books in order to publish and sell them whether through physical bookshops or online, and normally do everything (editorial, graphic design, and marketing) for the book in house until it is eventually in a bookstore.

Children and Young Adult Publishing gets its own category although it is actually a subset of Trade Publishing. It focuses on books that are intended for children and teenagers. Children’s Publishing normally includes “fairytale and traditional rhymes” that were originally relayed orally (Ribbonfish, “A Short Guide to the Different Types of Publishing”). It tends to be characterized by clear morals and colorful illustrations, whereas Young Adult publishing (a term coined in the 1920s) is more of a middle ground between children and adult publishing. It is often abbreviated to Y.A. and is targeted towards early to late teens. These books are often focused on the “challenges

of youth and coming of age” (Ribbonfish, “A Short Guide to the Different Types of Publishing”).

Academic Publishing has been defined as university presses and other publishers who target university professors and students. This includes presses like The University of New Orleans Press, The Louisiana State University Press, and Wiley-Blackwell Publishing. This category focuses on publishing texts that incorporate research or educational materials. These publishers require the texts they publish to have numbered references, bibliographies, and footnotes (Ribbonfish, “A Short Guide to the Different Types of Publishing”). This also includes things like specialized papers and textbooks. Of course, that isn’t the rule. University presses can, and often do, publish things that aren’t textbooks or related to academic studies as well. An example of this can be seen with the University of New Orleans Press, which has recently published a fictional novel called *Continental Divide* by Alex Meyers.

The category of **Independent and Regional publishers** includes small publishing presses, such as Unnamed Press, C&R Press, and Tupelo Press. These publishers tend to have fewer resources than bigger presses, but work in smaller and more dedicated markets, usually selling local authors, local history books, and informational pamphlets. This can include **Boutique Publishing** which specializes in a very narrow subject area. This is for genres which demand a greater level of expertise (Ribbonfish, “A Short Guide to the Different Types of Publishing”). This can include genres like teaching materials for children or technical writing for specific fields such as the oil industry.

The next sub-category, **Vanity Publishing**, can be included under the **Self-Publishing** umbrella as this allows the author more authority over what happens to their work in a way that they may not have with other publishing houses. A vanity press is known for their availability to authors that want to cut out the “middleman” and just get their book published in order to get as many copies as they want or even have it published online (Ribbonfish, “A Short Guide to the Different Types of Publishing”). In this scenario authors provide the capital, and the publisher works for the author—an inversion of the usual arrangement. Something that is important to understand as well is that “the volume of unpublished and un-publishable authors out there leads many would-be publishers to go into the service side of pay-to-play or vanity publishing” (Biel 22). Vanity publishing was looked down on because they were publishing things just for the sake of making a quick buck. There are plenty of publishers that do this today, even with the stigma of being considered a vanity publisher. Don’t confuse this type of publishing with **Hybrid publishing**, which is a mix of Traditional and Self-publishing. Some Hybrid Publishers that are well known are Greenleaf Book Group, She Writes Press, and Unbound. Similar to Self-Publishing, Hybrid Publishers require an investment by the author, but the author maintains all of the rights to their work and has input on the design and marketing of the book. However, where Hybrid Publishing differs from vanity publishing is that it will have standards in regard to the manuscripts that they choose to accept, while Vanity Publishers will accept anything (“Types of Publishing”). Some examples of Hybrid Publishing standards include: considering the market potential of a manuscript and its ability to succeed, it may offer the potential for bricks-and-mortar

distribution if able, it will work with you in both the pre-publication and post-publication stages (Friedman, “What is a Hybrid Publisher?”).

This last sub-category falls under Self-Publishing. **Electronic Publishing** is a new type of publishing and is quickly becoming more and more the norm (Ribbonfish, “A Short Guide to the Different Types of Publishing”). While Trade publishers produce both print and electronic copies, other publishers are solely offering Electronic Publishing as an inexpensive alternative to the traditional way of publishing. This would mean that the authors work is completely digital with no physical copies making it an e-book. Authors wanting to break into the scene for the first time often go for this type of publishing, as a means of proving their marketability.

All of these options for publishing seems like a wonderful thing, right? It seems like authors are spoiled with choices, but lack of diversity limits options; the industry is predominantly Caucasian, and this is a problem. It limits the diversity of the stories and authors that people are exposed to. In the past, the written word was only for white men, but over time, society has forced the gates of literature open and are allowing people of every race and ethnicity to have access to it. But even in modern publishing, the problem of history lingers. Today’s society is realizing this, and more and more publishers are responding—adding more diversity into the publishing world. Established publishing companies are also diversifying themselves, with varying degrees of success.

Diversity is an issue across all genres in the publishing industry. Numerous studies have come to the same conclusion: There is a severe lack of literature written and published by people of color. For example, a study done by Leah and Bea Kosch in 2016 found that for every 100 books published in the romance genre by leading publishers,

only 7.8 were written by people of color. Of the publishers surveyed, half of them had less than 5% of their books written by people of color (Marshall, “Home”). Where children’s literature is concerned, a study done by The Cooperative Children’s Book Center shows that in 2016, Black, Latinx, and First/Native Nations authors combined only accounted for 6% of new children’s books being published (Marshall, “Home”). Lastly, a study done by Lee & Low concerning the demographics of the publishing industry found that 79% identified as Caucasian, 88% identified as heterosexual, and 92% identified as not disabled (Marshall, “Home”). To increase the diversity of published work we need to diversify the people working in the industry and we need more authors of color.

What All Publishers Do

In order to answer the question, *what is a publisher?* let’s define what a publisher does. In essence, a publisher’s job boils down to taking a manuscript and turning it into a published work. So, the second question we need to answer is, *what is a published work?* “A published work appears in more than one copy and is available, in some fashion, to an audience, large or small” (Lupton 11). Once you have found a manuscript that you want to work with, and by that, I mean something that is in line with what you want to be known for, you now have to improve it for publication, which begins with editorial work on the manuscript. Regardless of what company you work for, you must always edit for clarity and content, then for grammar. You will have to negotiate with printers, work with graphic designers, and gauge the public’s interest. When it comes down to it, the author, you, and your team will have worked hard to make this work publishable and something

that you are proud to put out into the world. Ellen Lupton editor of the book *Indie Publishing: How to Design and Produce Your Own Book* says, “publishing involves bravery and risk: it is entrepreneurial in an intellectual as well as a financial sense. To publish is to put yourself out there and proclaim that you have content worth sharing” (Lupton 11). When Lupton says “worth sharing,” I believe she is talking, not only about the content of the book, but also about your own views and hard work. Then again, that is every publisher’s dream. Who doesn’t want to publish something they love? That doesn’t mean that you will always be able to do that, but I hope that no matter what you publish it doesn’t go against your moral beliefs. This isn’t the kind of profession you should go into just for the money.

It’s important to note that the editorial process can take a long time depending on the publishing house. You have to be ready to handle many different setbacks that may arise. Setbacks can include clearing rights to quote from other published works, author’s opposition to improving the manuscript, indifference or negative attention from booksellers, and the book marketplace. Working as part of a team means that your work is going to go through different sets of hands before it ever reaches its final stages. This can seem like a complicated and slow process, but it is all for the betterment of the art you’re producing. It is almost assured that someone at some level in the process will catch a mistake or have a different view on how something is written (Kovac). This makes the process even longer when the manuscript is constantly changing hands, but a solid team will use this process to produce an improved manuscript.

There is a long list of things that need to be done to ensure the best possible manuscript is published: fact-checking, contracts, permissions, licensing, risk evaluation,

editing, designing, printing, networking, dealing with royalties and much more. In the text *Inside Book Publishing*, Giles Clark and Angus Phillips talk about the importance of contracting freelancers and even other publishing companies to do parts of this process. According to them, apart from deciding to publish a book and having the finances necessary to do it, all the other work can be outsourced. Specialists can be used to do all of the above stated jobs, but it is often necessary for publishing houses to outsource work in order to supplement a department that they may not have. Publishers of all sizes tend to do this in order to “reduce their staff overhead costs.” Outsourcing is something that originally started in editorial and production departments and has slowly branched to other parts (Clark and Phillips 2). This means that it’s unlikely that you will be able to work on every aspect of creating a book. However, no matter what aspect you work on for said manuscript it will give you the needed experience to figure out where your talents excel in the publishing process.

There are a multitude of things that happen when trying to get a book ready for publication, but it all happens in parts and processes, with different teams allocated for every section of the process. In order to break the book process down into something easier to follow, we’ll look at it in three branching parts. Peter Ginna editor of the book *What Editors Do* discusses three important parts of this process, “The first is *acquisition*—finding new works to publish, which includes not just screening submissions from authors and literary agents but also scouting for promising new writers or even seeking the right author for a project the editor thinks up” (Ginna 7). It is obvious that the first part would be attaining a manuscript, but Ginna points out that you shouldn’t limit yourself to just what gets submitted to you or what the agents are

saying is good. In my own experience helping to publish a book, I found screening the manuscripts to be a pretty fun part of the process. However, with over 730 submissions, it would have been impossible for me to have accomplished this on my own, at least if I wanted to get it done in a timely manner. Having that experience showed me that working in teams is quite beneficial. It does make it harder to come to a consensus on choosing a worthy manuscript if you're limited to only one manuscript, it definitely gives you more input on what a large group of people consider to be good literature, which is a purely subjective idea. If you have a large enough team helping to choose a manuscript you can use them to survey the manuscripts in your possession to see what may be popular. The best way to do that is by actually taking a survey of the population, which normally costs a lot of money and time. After that is done and you've chosen a manuscript, you come to the second phase discussed by Ginna called: text development.

...it is sometimes referred to as "pencil editing" after the time-honored tool for the job. This is what most people think of when they hear the word editing: the core task of working with the author, from proposal or first-draft manuscript, to make his manuscript as good as it can be and ready it for publication. Today, of course, much "pencil editing" is in fact done electronically, allowing quicker exchanges between author and editor and greater efficiency in later stages. (Ginna 8)

This step is probably one of the more labor-intensive processes depending on your relationship with the author and the manuscript. If you have more than one editor, there is a good possibility that they will each be working on different books. If not, they could be working on something together. The challenges and advantages of two editors are

obvious—there exists the chance to harm the process through conflicting opinions or styles of writing, but they can also catch problems that one editor may have missed. Keeping the author’s voice intact is a priority and working with the author to fix things is an integral part of editing. But there is always the chance that the author may be causing problems by not wanting to change things. As Biel says the “author is too close to the project to make decisions responsibly” so that is why we often times do it for them (Biel 22). The last part of the process may or may not include the editor and publisher, whether or not they are the same person. Ginna concentrates on the market in his last phase: publication.

The third phase of the editor’s job is what we usually understand by *publication*—the complex and demanding effort to get the book into the marketplace and put it in the hands of readers. This effort includes both the nuts-and-bolts tasks of production (turning the work from a manuscript into a printed and/or electronic volume, or perhaps an app or audiobook) and the wide range of activities that constitute sales, publicity, and marketing. (Ginna 10)

In Ginna’s last phase, you are making sure all the bits and pieces of the work are tightened as best as they can be as you will be working towards putting it out into the world. At this point in the process, you will be putting together catalogues, sell sheets, and different ideas for marketing the book in order to make it as successful as possible. As technology has progressed, the marketing side of things has been made easier if you understand how to use social media to your advantage. The author should help, as well, if they want to cover as many bases as they can. Now, just because you have made it to this point, that doesn’t mean you can relax. Plenty of things can still go wrong, but as long as

you have a quality book and preemptive plan in case the worst should happen, you should have a real chance in bookstores.

Now that we understand what a publisher actually does, what does it really take to have a successful publishing career? Well, the best way to have a successful publishing career is to set accomplishable goals. This means that when you've found your manuscript and are ready to do the work needed to make it as good as possible, you shouldn't make the goal to sell 10,000 copies of the book. Instead you should make it something like, "Let's get this book into bookstores." Having created the book itself is an accomplishment. Of course, we all want to sell many copies, but that shouldn't be at the expense of setting realistic goals.

In his book, *A People's Guide to Publishing*, Joe Biel discusses fellow publisher Peter Workman's "three-legged-stool" anecdote. Workman believes that in order to have a successful book, there are three required legs for it to stand on. The first leg is the book and all its different pieces such as "price, format, and trim size for its shelf and subject." The second leg is about the relationship of the author, the publisher, and the audience. Whether it had to do with the book's subject matter or the publisher's relationship with the book's audience, it is very important that the publisher has an authentic repertoire with their intended buyers. The third leg is "commerce at every level," meaning that the book that you decide to publish must "benefit everyone who touches it" in some way, shape, or form. "If any of these legs were missing, Workman believed that the stool would collapse, and the book would fail" (Biel 20-21). Workman's "three-legged-stool" is quite useful in thinking of the basic process of publishing a book. There are things that, no matter how many years pass, will never change in the industry. So, having three basic

rules to follow if all else fails will at least point you in the right direction. This, of course, doesn't solve all your problems because now people have the ability to publish their own work.

Writers Who Publish Their Own Work

This is where things tend to get tricky. If a writer wants to get their work published, they have plenty of avenues. Publishing houses are always looking for manuscripts; though whether or not a particular manuscript is a good fit for their company is a different story. However, writers now have the ability to publish their own work with the help of different websites such as Amazon, Wattpad, Blurb, and some others. As someone who wants to become a publisher, you may be wondering why am I expounding on writers publishing their own work. *Don't we want them to come to us in order to get their book published?* That's just the thing; we do. But we also have to show them what we can offer them and why we are worth it. I want to do that by going over the pros and cons of someone publishing their own work.

Let's start with the pros. One of the most important upsides for authors publishing their own work is the control they have over the manuscript. They get to decide on the title, the book cover, the font, and even the margins of their book. Of course, whether or not they have the experience and knowledge to do that, well, that's a different story. Another advantage is that they don't need an agent to get their foot in the door. Agents are normally required by most publishers when trying to get a manuscript to be accepted by a publishing house. The writer also gets to control the price of their book and where it gets distributed. Publishing their own work is almost instantaneous when done through an

Electronic Press. Lastly, they get all of the royalties and probably have a steadier stream of income if their book is popular enough. One of the most common websites that gives writers the ability to publish their own work is Amazon. Amazon is, for a self-publisher, an efficient and cost-effective way to get their books out to a wide variety of people. It has multiple avenues and options when deciding to publish with them and it can all be done online in a matter of days. Amazon gives first time publishers tools to properly format their work and sometimes even help with marketing. The biggest appeal with this type of publishing is the fact that the writer receives a majority of the profits. Of course, that doesn't mean it's perfect they should always read through the contracts carefully to make sure that they are going to have the best experience.

Now, let's go over the cons. One of the main disadvantages with writers self-publishing their work is that they miss out on having others edit their manuscript with fresh eyes. This is important because with a fresh a multitude of mistakes can be caught, whether they are large or small. This will not only let them get some important editing done, but also there will be other people that are just as invested in their success as they are. This also brings to mind the importance of having an agent. Most publishers require that an author have an agent in order to protect their best interests.

As the sole creator of a book it is up to authors to market their work and sell themselves to their audience. That can be hard depending on how much they know about marketing. While it is sometimes true that most bigger publishing companies aren't as invested in the marketing of their smaller writers, the smaller companies do set up marketing plans for their books no matter who they belong to. Keep in mind that the more exposure they get the better their book will perform. There is also the problem of

finding out how to distribute the book. Without the proper experience it can end up costing a lot of money just to find an effective distributor. It is really important that writers understand that a publisher isn't just there to tell them to change something because they don't like it or take a large portion of sales:

Professional publishers go much further and undertake a range of activities.

Publishers are not printers or mere 'middlemen' interjecting themselves between authors and readers while creaming off the profits. They both add value to authors' works and protect the value of their copyrights. (Clark and Phillips 1)

Publishers are there to handle all of the business aspects of the industry so that the writers don't have to. They take care of editing, licensing, fact checking, and much more. All of these things would have to be done by the author who possibly doesn't have the experience or the team to get it all done. Most importantly, all of the expenses come out of a writer's pocket when they self-publish, which can become a financial burden.

They have to be sure about what they are doing when they finally decide to get their work published, and it would be more beneficial to hear about someone's personal experience with creating and publishing their own book. For an in-depth perspective into what it's like to self-publish, I interviewed Terry Sykes-Bradshaw, a Michigan native who moved to Florida and started to self-publish her books.

She has always been a writer, from the time she was very small until now; it has always been her passion. I wanted to understand her motivations for going into self-publishing and it was actually pretty simple: time. She had already spent years writing and she didn't want to spend more years trying to get an agent and then hoping a publisher would be interested. She believed that this approach would be easier, but has

since said that she feels like that was wrong. Most writers who want to publish their own work normally don't understand what it entails, because it hasn't really been laid out in an easy to understand way. It makes sense that she wanted to get her work published quickly after spending so much time on it. However, if you want something done right, it's going to take time. Terry said that her main reason for going it alone was time, but there was more to it than that. Yes, she thought it would be easier and faster, but the truth is she was intimidated by the daunting task of having to get an agent and then still being denied access to the publishing industry.

Back then, about 2009, they were like, "*Oh if you don't have an agent, forget it! Don't talk to any publishers.*" I think in the publishing industry, the fact that you always have to have an agent to even be able to unlock the front door, let alone walk through it, makes the task daunting. Having to go through an agent and a publisher just to start the process, I thought, was a bit much. And now, when you go to a writer's conference and you talk to all these people, a lot of them are into self-publishing for just the whole reason that they want to be in charge of the book. (Sykes-Bradshaw)

This makes sense; if the doors of publishing are locked to people because they don't have an agent, it can be discouraging. But that isn't as much the case today. While it is preferable for writers to have agents, it definitely isn't a deal breaker if they don't have one, though I do believe having an agent does protect the writer's best interests. Some presses that don't require an agent are: Small Beer Press, Allworth Press, and Citylights Booksellers & Publishers.

What caught my interest in particular was the process that Terry went through to publish her books. She already has three books published and one in the process of being written. At this point, she has had a lot of experience with publishing her books, but when she first started, that was a different story. I asked about her experience publishing her books and she broke it down for me by book. For her first book she was a complete “newbie” and didn’t fully understand what she was getting into. “I would say, in a word self-publishing is frustrating. Because you don’t know what you’re doing and you’re trying to fight your way through, especially for your first book” (Sykes-Bradshaw). She ended up finding a printer that had a multitude of options for her to pick from, but also a packaged deal that they didn’t explain very well. They gave her contacts and let her work with different people that they knew. “But that was kind of all pieces and parts and every time that something came up, I was having to go back and say ‘What do you mean, and how does this happen?’ It was a really slow process” (Sykes-Bradshaw). She was able to publish her book through a vanity publisher. That means that they offered to help her publish her book in exchange for a fee of about \$5,000 to \$7,000 dollars (this varies depending on the publisher) and very little investment on their part. They didn’t really teach her anything about the process and when there was a problem, she constantly had to figure it out on her own. So, even though she wanted a faster process, it ended up being quite slow.

Unfortunately, her second publication wasn’t much better:

I spent two years of my life being furious at this publisher, who I found through winning a lottery at my writing group. I won her editing package and I didn't know until the week before the book was published that she is dyslexic. That's

fine and I appreciate and I value that she could push through that and become what she was, but boy there was certainly huge holes in her ability because of that. (Sykes-Bradshaw)

I guess winning things for free isn't always a blessing, but this shows why doing your research on a publisher is important. You have to make sure that they have the best interests of the manuscript at heart. Although this publisher was working with dyslexia and ADD, Terry said that she was also trying to change things that she felt just didn't need to be changed. Having to deal with a publisher and editor reworking the manuscript can be frustrating, especially when you feel like it is done incompetently.

Luckily, the third time seems to have been the charm for Terry. She found a publisher that was actually interested in helping her create a quality book.

He did a very professional job, he found the cover designer and we all worked together, my idea and his idea. He was very on board. So, hybrid publishing seems to be heading towards a more real publishing experience, although I heard that it's getting more and more difficult because there are fewer publishers.

(Sykes-Bradshaw)

Terry was finally able to find someone to help her publish her book and it actually went well. She was still able to have most of the control over her book and work with someone who was able to outsource a lot of the work for her. She paid an arm and a leg for that service, but she was happy with the work. I asked her what kind of advice she would give someone who wanted to go about publishing their own book.

Well I didn't know how much it would cost. That was a thing. You know you're basically paying for everything. Somebody once said to me, "Well you just write

because you like to, just for self-fulfillment.” And I’m like “Yea, but I wouldn’t mind getting actually paid for it, thank you very much.” Self-fulfillment can be very nice but you don’t have to pay for it, so I wish I had known that and I also wish I had known just how crucial it is to have some good marketing skills because if you don’t have any marketing skills then the book doesn’t get out there, and that is where I fall. (Sykes-Bradshaw)

It is important to know that when you decide to go into self-publishing you are the one taking the risk. You have to put your money up to pay for everything and if you don’t earn anything from your publication, then you’ve lost that money. Going through a publisher mitigates that problem since they are the ones spending money for you to create your book. Marketing is another big issue because if you are spending your own money you must market yourself in order to make something back. If you don’t put your book out there, then you’re setting yourself up for failure.

No matter how you get into publishing you must have a clear goal in mind and the passion to back it up. The reason that Terry was able to accomplish getting her books published was the sheer passion for her craft. However, she went through many a rough time before she was able to work with someone whom she found competent. That will happen a lot. It isn’t going to happen overnight, sometimes it doesn’t happen at all. Terry went through a lot and has found that it is definitely better to work with someone that will help you outsource work to professionals so you can create something together.

It’s also important for future writers to understand that while they can get their work published on websites like Amazon, Wattpad, Create Space, and many more, having someone that is actually invested in your work is a lot better. Yes, you may think

doing everything yourself will be fun and you will get all the credit and the royalties, but there are many things you may not understand about the world of publishing. There is a lot that you have to do to copyright, get an ISBN number, and a multitude of other business-related things that a publisher can gladly help you with. It isn't going to be easy to get your work out there, but if you have the passion and keep trying, you will accomplish at least a part of your goal.

As a future publisher, you have to understand that not only are there ways for people to publish their work on their own, but there are hybrid publishers that will help people publish their own work, even if it isn't up to the standards of their publishing company. You have to be able to offer authors the support they need without making them feel like you're going to change all of their hard work. You should also keep in mind that you will get plenty of submissions that just aren't up to snuff. They will be bad, and you will send them back. There will come a point where you just wish someone would send something good your way, and that is your time to shine. Understand what people can do on their own and make sure that you can offer them that and more.

Trade Publishing

Now that I've covered what writers are able to do on their own, I want to take an in-depth dive into the pool that is Trade Publishing. As a person looking for experience in publishing, joining an established publishing house can be very educational. However, at this point we've come to a crossroads. You see, there are two types of established publishing houses. First, "The Big Five," which consists of Hachette Book Group, HarperCollins, Macmillan Publishers, Simon & Schuster, and Penguin Random House.

The second types are the independent publishing houses that can be found across the country. Hopefully, you can find an independent or academic publisher in your city to get an internship from in order to start getting the necessary experience and knowledge that will help you reach your goals.

Before going over what exactly it takes to acquire an internship, a job, or to volunteer, I want to examine two different publishing houses, which will give us some insight on how different publishing houses can be, such as Penguin Random House. The histories began as two different publishing houses. Random House was founded in 1927 and Penguin Books was founded in 1935. They both published very successfully until they merged in 2013, and have published and distributed a wide variety of books. This publisher also has plenty of subdivisions that branch off of its main house, which allows them to focus on different genres with varying degrees of success. When you look up their website, it's very well organized and takes it's time guiding you through what they produce. If you're looking for information in the careers section, there are a multitude of open positions and information on how to apply.

In comparison, a local publishing house where I live in Louisiana is Pelican Publishing Company. Founded in 1926, it is a year older than Random House and is currently the biggest independent trade book publisher in the Southern United States. However, even with that title, it still isn't considered a part of the "Big Five." Despite enlarging its international reach with foreign rights sales and purchases Pelican remains quite local and only has the one location in Gretna, Louisiana. They have a variety of titles and genres, but focus on the South in general, and Louisiana in particular. If you explore their website, you are immediately brought to the different types of books they

produce. Looking into their careers section there aren't as many options as it is a much smaller press, and it's mostly just applying for an internship. It seems they want you to try interning before they hire you on.

It's easy to assume that well-established publishing houses like the ones mentioned above would only look for people with the credentials to work in their company. Many of the older generation of publishers, who didn't create their own publishing houses, were able to start from the bottom of an established publishing house and work their way up. While education is important, I have found that experience in media and an eclectic educational background are quite desirable. In an interview with L.B. Kovac, the Copywriter and Publicity Coordinator in the Marketing and Sales Department at Louisiana State University Press, we discussed her educational background and how she thought the different jobs she had in marketing and publicity helped her to get hired:

The people who were interviewing me really liked the fact that I was at least somewhat familiar with the processes of taking a book from a manuscript to a finished product. They were super enthusiastic about that. Also being a publicist and the fact that I had a marketing background and had done some publicity, even if it wasn't to the extent that they were asking for in the position. (Kovac)

Clearly, as Kovac stated, having a wide variety of talents is desirable when trying to gain the attention of a potential employer in the publishing industry. For example, most publishing houses want you to have had an internship with a press or a magazine, which would give you some kind of experience in publishing. They also really want you to have

some contacts in the publishing world, whether they are people that work at another press or even potential writers.

Kovac also looked into bigger locations, such as Penguin Random House and Simon and Schuster. These two giants in the publishing world are interested in people who are bilingual, especially if they know Spanish. Kovac also mentioned that they found applicants who had done law or legal type internships really appealing (Kovac). That is an aspect of publishing that I had never thought about before. Having the knowledge of legal proceedings and being able to look into what is acceptable under the law is a very useful talent: helping to stop plagiarism, having unaccredited work, or clearing rights to content. Even with experience, there are still things that you may not have realized are important to publishing. In Kovac's case, she had found that her eclectic experience with media and marketing helped her.

I didn't expect for it to take such a long time for me to get a position. There are tons of people after what is becoming fewer and fewer jobs in this field. So, it did take me a long time to get this job and now that I have it, it's mine and I don't want anyone to take it away. Also, it's partially Louisiana: like I said, we don't have a lot of publishing companies, so the positions are few and far between.

(Kovac)

This brings us back to the location problem. For Kovac, she applied to many different publishing houses, whether they were in her area or not. It was something that she made a point to tell me: "You have to be willing to move if you can't find a job in your area. Otherwise, you will never do what you've set out to do, which is become a publisher. You have to be flexible and willing to go anywhere if you want to get a job with an

established publishing house” (Kovac). This is an excellent point. Sometimes it is necessary for you to look outside of your area in search of the job you want, but you should also be willing to look outside of publishers in order to get started in the publishing world.

Coming from a geographically challenged area myself, where publishers are concerned, one of the other ways to enter into publishing is to work as a reader for an agent. They are constantly in need for readers as their “slush pile” can often be overwhelming. “Slush Pile” refers to unsolicited manuscripts that are sent to agents as well as publishing companies. Internships with agencies can range from lax to intense in the way they run their business so you should really look into their programs and the types of authors they back so that you aren’t doing something that you have no interest in. Agencies will normally have their internship requirements on their websites, as well as what the internship will require you to do. The great thing about some agency internships is that they can be done remotely, which means that your actual location is not so much of a hindrance in this case. Most importantly they will give you a wide variety of tasks to do such as: evaluating query letters, assessing proposals and manuscripts, perfecting pitch letters, and analyzing contracts. This is a great way to get experience in the publishing world that you can then take to a publishing company you want to work for.

In publishing most people report that there are times when you’re going to be a part of a project and probably not love everything about it, but there will also be times when you come out of it thinking: *this is why I’m here*. Kovac shared such a moment with me, which was the first book that she wrote the jacket copy for. She had to create the

jacket copy and get it approved, then “go through the stages of verifying the jacket” through the different people working on it. She said that it was a truly gratifying experience once she was able to hold the finished copy of the book in her hands. At that point, she realized, “I helped do this. This is great!” (Kovac).

It helps to be open to different positions in the publishing world because you may find one is actually more your speed than another. Kovac had a similar experience and she advised that I stay open minded in my search. Being open minded is a helpful, but don't do something that you aren't interested in. It's great to get experience in different aspects of the publishing world because that will help you when you're trying to move up in your profession. The importance of eclectic abilities and backgrounds will only become more prominent as time goes on, as Kovac explained: “All the positions that I got a call back for really liked how diverse my background was. They liked that I didn't just go to school for writing and do everything in writing. They liked the fact that I did some marketing and had some managerial experience.” (Kovac). That isn't to say that if you aren't diverse enough you won't have a chance, but it is anecdotal evidence. Diversity is increasingly important in the world of publishing, as it always should have been. While Kovac has diversity in the form of her abilities, the publishing world needs more diversity in the form of people from different backgrounds and ethnicities. Of course, this view is that of someone who has just recently joined the world of publishing. We also need to cover what someone who has been in the publishing world for a while has to say.

I was lucky enough to be able to get an interview with Antoinette De Alteriis, who works in the Promotion Department at Pelican Publishing Company. She has been working in the publishing industry for close to thirty years. Antoinette has a lot of

experience in retail and the book industry in general. She was born in Texas and made her way to Louisiana as a child before moving again, but she eventually made her way back here only to have to leave because of Katrina. When she finally acquired her job at Pelican, she had quite a bit of experience. Since she has worked in the publishing industry for many years, she has an insight on the changes that not only Pelican Publishing Company has gone through, but most of the publishing industry in general. When I asked her what has changed the most, she said that it was mostly the author's involvement with their books:

When I started out in book publishing in 1988, authors went on a book tour very rarely. But mostly it was all about what the publishing company did. They did print advertising, they did radio, they had book tours and so they did all of that and now publishing houses, except for their top authors, they don't do anything; there is no budget. It's all social media or whatever the author is doing which is a big difference. (De Alteriis)

The Internet is one of the biggest innovations to hit the world, and the book industry is one of the first to have gotten access to it from the beginning. It's changed many of the ways the publishing industry works through emails, social media, and their accessibility.

Remember, being open minded and adaptable is really desirable in a future employee. Plus being faced with complicated dynamics every now and then is a great learning experience. When asked what type of abilities were needed to be working in the promotional level at the Pelican Publishing Company, De Alteriis explained in depth what abilities were most important for new hires to have:

I find that the most valuable experiences for our interns and employees are some type of retail background or a customer service background because we deal so closely with clients both internal and external. Whether they are our authors, media outlets, bloggers, or reviewers, we are constantly dealing with people. Someone who only has writing experience, while lovely, usually does not have the interpersonal skills that we need. (De Alteriis)

Writing experience is expected, but a diversity of skills is very important, as well as being adaptable to many situations. Another skill that Alteriis felt was very important was being able to set aside one's ego. As a person working for a bigger company, you may be writing promotional material. This makes the ability to change your voice very important.

As she mentioned, setting aside one's ego is very important when working in the book industry, so I asked if she often had to set aside her own ego and she said, "I don't like all the books I write about, but I have to promote them as if I do and I have to write in the voice of the people that wrote the book when we're writing dust jacket copies and that is a really hard skill for people to transition into" (De Alteriis). This is coming from someone that works at a company that publishes highly controversial books. These books include a Confederate Coloring and Learning Book, which is described as a book that "emphasizes the motives of Southern heroes and their faith." Let's be honest, it's a coloring book glorifying racism. Personally, I don't think I could work on a book I didn't morally agree with because I feel like my work would suffer, but it can be done. It's also important to pay attention to the world around you. Society is always changing, and it would be smart to understand different trends that are spiking. Seeking a vast number of different experiences can really help enhance your credibility, reliability, and level of

qualification for the specific positions you may seek in the publishing realm. Even though as I have stated before, it is okay to gain one skill and perfect it, you shouldn't be afraid to branch out and explore.

The publishing company you end up working for is interested in selling. It is always best to work at a place where you can present your work proudly to the world. It is true that you may work on things you don't love and no workplace is perfect, but you should never have to go against your own morals. De Alteriis has also had to deal with things like this, whether it was working on books she didn't like or agree with or dealing with controversy surrounding a book they were publishing.

Then we have books and you're just like, "Why do we have this book?" But there are audiences that want to buy these book and if other publishers will not publish them then that's what we're here for and that was Dr. Kalhoun's [the founder of Pelican publishing] whole philosophy was that he wanted to keep books accessible to people that were either going out of print or were not finding printers and that's what we do. That's what we've specialized in for almost 100 years now and it works. (De Alteriis)

As an employee at a publishing company if you have to work with a book that is strongly against your ideals or morals you have two choices: 1. You ignore your moral obligation to object to the book and continue working with that on your conscious. 2. You leave that company and find one more in line with your beliefs.

To round out the interview I had with Antoinette De Alteriis, I asked her what type of advice she would give someone who wants to explore a career in this industry. She had a lot to say, but her main piece of advice for potential publishers was to do an

internship. Find what you're interested in whatever genre that may be. Understand that this is a solitary pursuit and mind your ego in all things.

Try it, do an internship, do a couple of internships, find out what you actually like about it. Not academically, but actually doing it because the day-to-day work is different. I would say that a personality that's going to do very well in one area of publishing is not going to do well in another. It's a pretty solitary pursuit, and more so now that we have technology, because now you don't have to go to a conference, it's all-online, you're all listening in on a webcast you're not going places and publishing houses don't have money to send you places. So, my advice is doing an internship. Practice dropping your ego out of your writing. Find out what kind of books you like and do your research on publishers because not all publishers publish all things. (De Alteriis)

She gave a lot of good advice. If we lay it all out on the table, in order to really know what you enjoy about publishing you have to experience it. It is the basis of deciding what moves are best for you to take along with the guide you should follow to enter into the world of publishing. From the type of positions in the publishing industry to the type of publishing houses, and even down to the very itty-bitty details of your personality, it can all affect the path you take.

Entrepreneur Publishers

Joining the world of publishing doesn't mean that you have to take the beaten path. There are, of course, other ways of joining this profession that are more involved, and some ways that leave you with nothing to show for it. The best way to do that is by

starting your very own publishing company. With every person I've interviewed who has chosen this path, their main concern was passion, immediately followed by business sense, and a support system.

The first person that I interviewed was Candace Huber, owner of Tubby & Coo's Mid-City Book Shop, which she named after her grandparents who grew up in Mid-City, New Orleans. I wanted to know what led her to the idea of owning a bookstore, then eventually starting her own press and being the passionate woman, she is. She had a lot to say. "So, I am the kind of person that if I'm doing something, I want to be an expert at whatever I'm doing and so I've learned a lot about the book industry and selling books" (Huber). I completely understand that line of thinking. I find the creation of books to be amazing and it seemed that she did too. "I really just wanted to figure it out, I talked to a bunch of Publishers and just went through the whole process and I did it because I wanted to know how to do it. I basically just learn by doing. It went really well for me, which is good." (Huber). That was an important point in our interview. If she wanted to learn how to do something, she just decided to go out and do it. Despite deciding to do this on her own, she had a wonderful support system from her family and friends. So, even though she would recommend for people to just go for it if they wanted to, she also stressed that they have to be passionate about it, because otherwise, it definitely isn't going to work out.

Although Tubby & Coo's has been around for a few years and Candace is well on her way to publishing the kinds of books that she loves, it takes constant upkeep to maintain that kind of momentum. There is no guarantee that her bookstore and publishing company are going to make it. It is hard work to keep a business running. I wanted to

know what kind of struggles she had to get through as she was going through the learning process and what she may have deemed to be the hardest aspect of running her own business. For her, that was trying to figure out what her customer base wanted. It is a difficult process to figure out what people are going to think is interesting and what may become popular.

What she found most difficult was also the most fun. If she could do it all over again, the only thing she would change was the trust she placed in herself and creating her niche in the world of bookstores. Other than that, she believes that her endeavors couldn't have gone better than they already did. When I asked about what she considered to be one of her most gratifying moments in the book industry, she said that it was creating a safe space for other people. The people that come in and buy her books call her bookstore their happy place and was something that she strived for. Those feelings of wanting to create a space where people can come feel happy and safe are really inspiring. The fact that she is able to accomplish that with her bookstore is quite amazing. Since Candace mostly sells sci-fi and fantasy novels, she is inclined to help create those kinds of books through her publishing. It also helps that she has an interest in writing as well, as she will be able to help diversify the sci-fi and fantasy genre through her work as a publisher and future writer.

It's also important to note Candace's educational background: she has a bachelor's degree in English and Communications. I wanted to know what she found to be the most difficult thing to deal with in publishing. In Candace's case, she found it hard to deal with printers. As she is just starting as a publisher, she didn't feel like she had enough experience to really give me a good idea of what the most difficult thing is, but

she was adamant that any aspiring publisher needs to have a good understanding of printers. Most of the other things she said you could get help with, but the printing, that was where you needed to have all your ducks in a row. At the time of writing this, her press is still in the middle stages as far as she is concerned. She settled on her first manuscript a while ago, and she is in the process of doing all the things required to make the piece ready for publication. She still has many different things to go through before it's ready, but she has pre-sold many copies through a social media campaign.

One of the best ways that a person in the profession you want can help you is by giving you some kind of guidance, right? Well, yes and no. They could reassure you or they could dash your dreams across a rock. Either way, the most important thing is that they are truthful. Candace gave some pretty good advice when I asked her what she would tell someone that wanted to follow in her footsteps; if you have the passion, then you should do it. But the passion has to be there, otherwise the struggle will snuff out your work ethic and you will give up.

I think the best advice I could give anyone that wants to do any of this is like to do it. Don't be afraid. The worst that could happen is that it fails and you close. I don't know, I feel like a lot of people want to do things but are too scared because they're like what happens if I put all this money into this and it closes? Well, what is the worst that could happen? You lose some money, but you did it. (Huber)

This becomes your entire life and it will be literally all that you do. Most importantly do what you want to do but understand what you're getting into. That can sound a bit disheartening for people who might have thought that going into a business you love would be all fun and games. But here is the thing; it is still business. At the end of the day

you are trying to create a lifestyle that you can sustain. Of course, that doesn't always happen.

The next person I interviewed was a woman named Harriet Burbeck. She is an experienced art instructor and a freelance illustrator, that is currently based in Louisiana. Her friends tend to call her Happy, and I immediately understood why when I met her. She was very friendly and a nice person throughout the whole interview process. The first thing that I wanted to know was why she wanted to go into publishing. I was really interested in what it was that inspired her to really go for it. In the end, it was her friends and their kids. When she couldn't find a book from her childhood anywhere, she decided she would be the one to bring it back into print. For her it would just be a plus if she was able to publish another book with the proceeds.

Burbeck explained that her reason for starting the publishing company with her family was because the book, *Artie and the Princess*, had sentimental value to them. It was originally published in 1945 and has since gone out of print, it was written and illustrated by Marjorie Torrey. This book had been in Burbeck's family for a long time and they wanted to share it with people close to them. Being a small press that so far has only one publication, and a re-publication at that, I was interested in how they decided to market their book. It turns out that consigning with a bookstore is pretty common although Harriet and her family didn't have to really do that. Since the book that they were publishing was out of print, many people that had been looking for it found out about them through the internet because they were the only people publishing it. However, if the book hadn't sold itself, she explained that consigning with a bookstore is the way to go in order to market a book more.

Burbeck and her family were able to do so well because the book, *Artie and the Princess*, that they were bringing back into publication had a large enough following that the press they started, Lost Tales Publishing, ended up supporting itself. It wasn't enough for them to not have day jobs, but if they wanted to publish another book, they could definitely afford it. However, that would be all that they could afford. Harriet didn't say it in so many words, but publishing this book was a labor of love. She knew that she wasn't going to get anything out of it other than the self-satisfaction that she had done it and that is an important lesson. Most of the time there is no reward from bringing art into the world, that's why most artists are only recognized after they're dead and gone and can't profit from their fame.

In Burbeck's case, they got lucky that the book they were bringing back into print had fallen by the wayside and that the copyright hadn't been renewed. Otherwise, they wouldn't have been able to accomplish their goals. I wanted to know what she thought was the most important part of the process of creating this book for republication. While we talked about the book, she mentioned her partner and how he is a web designer. He helped her with the website for their company and helped to format the book and choose the font. So, it was great that she didn't have to outsource that. However, she also talked about how important the actual process of mailing things out was. There were a lot of different aspects that went into the shipping process that she hadn't anticipated, especially since they went into a second printing and had a lot more book sales to contend with. She had to figure out how to correctly package huge orders and make sure that they wouldn't be damaged and how to price them correctly, which is especially daunting. It's

hard enough to ship things back when you want to return something, I can only imagine what it's like to ship a load of books.

Most publishing companies tend to outsource that work because it's easier, but it's not impossible to distribute your own stock. Unless it reaches high demand, then you may have to hire more staff or outsource. As our interview continued, we talked about things she would have changed if she could have gone back and redone things that maybe hadn't been very easy for her. For her, it was just the business side of things. That was the most boring and hard part for her. She said that she just didn't have the business part wired into her; she was more into the artsy side of things. If she could have roped a friend in that was good with business from the beginning, she believed that would be the only thing she would have changed.

Burbeck had a lot of people she could look to for guidance in starting up her own publishing house and having that support system is necessary if you want to succeed. For example, the publishing community here in Louisiana is quite small and so she had help from the Editor-in-Chief and Managing Editor of the University of New Orleans Press, Abram Himmelstein and George K. Darby. It also definitely helps that she split the responsibility of the publication with her sister and her mother. Having people that she could trust helped her to accomplish what she set out to do. But even with support, it is still a trial, and for Harriet and her family setting up a "circle of accountability," as she put it, was a challenge. They had to make sure that everything was getting done, so they made sure that each of them had a job that they would do and, in a way, it would be a checkable system. Her sister dealt with emails, her mother with shipping, and Harriet got

the invoices, and so far, that has worked in their favor. There are great things to come out of this creation that they started together.

Not only have they brought a book that meant a lot to their family back into circulation, they are doing amazingly well. Harriet talked about what she found to be the most rewarding moment for her, and it was really just the happiness of bringing a book back into print that had a wholesome story for children. She was really proud of what she was able to create with her family. I asked her what her dream goals would be if she could do anything in publishing, and she said that she would love to be able to publish books in speculative fiction by a large range of demographic authors, especially considering the severe lack of diversity in the industry today.

We ended up going off on a tangent of what ifs and how we would have liked to see more diversity in well-known titles. It was fun to speculate what Harry Potter would have been like if more of the characters were different races and ethnicities. Diversity in literature, whether it's the characters in the book, the writers who create them, or the publishers that support them, is something that I can get behind. It is a sorely needed addition to the world of publishing, and it was great to bond over a mutual dream. When I asked Harriet about what kind of advice she had for someone who wanted to create their own publishing company, she had this to say:

Don't expect anything out of it except for personal satisfaction. I think this is advice that everybody gives, but if you really love something, like, if you really want to see this published, then you're always going to succeed if you publish it, cause then it will be published. I think if the goal is financial stability, I think it's going to be hard out the gate and so I would say make sure you have a project that

you're really passionate about and support strongly. Make sure that your working with people that you trust and care about. Even if they aren't good business-people, they are going to be committed to your project. (Burbeck)

This is an important piece of advice. Passion is always the most important thing when you're going to start your own business, no matter what it is. That's why almost everyone I have interviewed has stressed it. Publishing even more so because you are going to be working on something that you have to feel deeply for in order to be invested. You will spend a lot of time working on something to make it perfect for publication and it all comes down to how passionate you are about it.

Conclusion

So, you may still be wondering, *how do you get a job in publishing?* To answer the question simply, you have to be passionate and dedicated to wanting to work in the world of publishing. You will have to apply to every position that you are qualified for and you may have to lower the standards of where you want to start your career. You will have to move if your location isn't viable. You need to be invested in the materials that you're producing and helping to put into the world. As I was writing and gathering information on the subject of publishing, I was constantly being asked what it was that I really wanted out of this. Whenever the question was thrown my way, I would always freeze up and shrug my shoulders, searching in my mind for a good enough answer to give. Obviously, I didn't choose this profession for the money. One of the first things you hear when looking into publishing is to not expect to succeed if you're only in it for the money. Having interned for Chin Music Press in this last semester has given me some

insight on the different things that you do as a publisher. But it has also shown me the excitement of getting to work with a publisher on books that I personally find interesting. I got to handle their social media, promote their books, and even just post about things that relate to the types of books they publish and support. I am also getting to work with their editors on different works in progress. Working with a team and actually being able to contribute to a book that more people are going to end up reading is a really amazing feeling.

Looking at where I started and where I am now, I can see a fundamental difference in how I feel about getting into publishing. As a student, you are molded into what your teachers believe to be the perfect learner. This isn't altogether bad, but when it comes time for you to make a decision about your future and what you want to do with it, it can be hard to think outside the box of what is acceptable. You grow up wanting to please others, and even if you go through a rebellious stage, you still come back to wanting to have some kind of affirmation of your choices. This can be motivating to a lot of people, but it also hinders you because you never want to step outside of that box and ruffle too many feathers. However, it's extremely important that you do, especially when deciding that you want to be a publisher. *Why?* Because you have to decide for yourself what your publishing will represent. *What does it mean when you publish a book? Are you proud of it? Do you want to share it with others, or do you hide it because maybe you weren't very fond of that book? Maybe you didn't share the same ideals as that author.* Whatever your reasons may be, you must resolutely make them for yourself.

So, now when people ask me, *what are my plans after school?* I tell them the truth, I want to publish books that inspire young people to be creative, brave, and

understanding. I want to publish books that may cover tough subjects and call into question how certain people are treated, and I will never forgo listening to my own ideals just to publish a book that might sell. When I graduate, I will be in the large pool of fellow students that want to go into publishing. It isn't about being successful, because even a successful publisher isn't making money; it's about getting to be a part of the art that we put out into the world. To get a job in publishing is to embrace the reality that you are doing this because you are passionate about the art of literature.

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Appendix

Interview: Harriet Burbeck

1. Where are you from? What was your childhood like? Have you always been into books?

I'm from Iowa. I was actually born in California and we moved to Iowa when I was two. So, I was raised in a small town called Fairfield. I had a happy childhood; we were in the country so its rural which I actually think is great for kids. At least, I liked it. Yea, I've always loved books, I've loved books since I can remember, Like I can remember being young enough that I couldn't read and like flipping through books and just feeling frustrated and stymied that I couldn't read the words in them.

2. Can you tell me about your educational history? Where you went to school? What did you major in?

So, I dropped out of college. For high school I went to the School of The Age of Enlightenment. My parents were followers of the Maharishi Mahasiyogi, it's kind of like a hippy school. Then I started to go to the University of Iowa, and then I dropped out of school. I went back to college in my thirties after I had started the publishing company and I went to the University of New Orleans and majored in Art, specifically Studio Art, with a focus in painting and I minored in English. Mostly because I had a professor in one of my literature classes who was like why aren't you majoring in English and I was like because I'm majoring in Art and she said you should at least minor and I was like, "Well, Okay." Then I went to Edenborough and got a master's degree in illustration from the University of Edenborough. So, I have an advanced degree, but I really like just got it. So, most of my life I was self-taught.

3. What led you to the decision of making this a career choice? Did you think it would be viable as a career?

Well, what I'll say is that it's not my career, and I knew that it wasn't going to be a career going into it. My friends started having kids, and I was like "Oh I loved this book growing up and I want to get that for them, for their kids to have." I looked online and you couldn't get it anywhere and I thought well this will be a fun project to do with my Mom and my Sister, who are my partners in this project, and it was. It ended up being something that's self-sustaining so we didn't lose money and it made money, but it didn't make enough money for us to live off of certainly. But we do have enough money that we could publish another book if we want to.

4. What inspired you to create your own press?

It was really that my friends were having kids and I wanted to bring this book back into print. It seemed like a fun project to do with my family and I did kind of think, oh maybe I'll publish my own book then or something. There were other books we had in mind for sure, copyright is such a fickle beast. Copyright law changed so many times over the 20th century. So there is a woman in DC who just goes to the Library of Congress and figured out the copyright status of the book. The idea was to make the press for this book. The goal was to publish more books, but we just haven't found anything that quite meets with our mission.

5. What would you consider to be your dream job in this field?

That's an interesting question. I would love to be able to publish regularly. I think what we had with this book is fairly unique though. Because it is a book that people remember fondly. We published something that people wanted, just right out the gate. We made a thing that people wanted and then they paid us for it. That's sort of perfect. I don't think that you can always do that in publishing. But I would love to publish more books. I do think it would be wonderful to be the person who helps makes books come into the world with living authors, but I think being a small press and having to do the advertising, which we don't really do. I don't have the business acumen to do the publishing things that would be required you know in order to like ethically work with a living artist. But I think if we were bigger or if one of us was interested in that kind of thing, but none of us are. Then it would be really fun to like, you know, to help people make books. So, my dream job would be to have somebody to handle all the boring publicity stuff and the business stuff. Honestly, I don't really want to be a publisher for my career, but the real thing that I would love to do would be to publish speculative fiction, like science fiction and fantasy, by like a larger range of demographic authors than we have at the moment, more people of color, people of different genders.

6. What was the biggest challenge that you didn't see coming? As opposed to what has been the most gratifying moment.

The biggest challenge is its just like a lot of emailing and stuff. It's business things. Which I'm like "Oh I hate business, right." But we've kind of made this system that works, which is I get the PayPal invoices, then send them to my mom who ships the books out, and so that way we've got like this circle of accountability. My sister is in charge of the email address and so if somebody emails us to get like a large order or something, then she is the point person for that, and my mom is the shipping person. Because she doesn't want to deal with emails. And so that's been like good, but that was challenging. The gratifying thing is when we went into the second printing, I reread the book to try to catch the typos that we didn't catch the first time around. And I reread it and I was just like this is good this is solid; this is like a sweet simple story about a kid and a dragon. And the illustrations are beautiful, and I am just happy that it got to have this new life in the future.

7. Is there anything that you would do different since you started in this business? What are the things that you would keep the same?

I think that I would try to rope somebody in that was more into business. Because that kind of is the thing. I have a few friends whose brains are wired in that way and luring them into the ground floor might have been a wiser idea. There were just a lot of things we didn't understand. Mostly just like shipping stuff. Business and just understanding just how it works. I talked to Abram and I talked to GK about it. I think that we avoided a lot of mistakes because I just kept going back to GK and Abram for advice.

8. What all is involved in publishing a book? What are the most important aspects in your opinion?

My partner is a web designer, so he does graphic design and he made our website and just keeps it up. Which is something that, you know, if you don't have somebody like that in your life, that can be difficult. He helped a lot with the graphic design of the book and that was very important. What this book taught me a lot of lessons that I have applied to my own work. It's nice to be just able to make a book look good, like look at the gutters, and the margins, and the font and the justifications and everything and just like understand what makes that looked good and what doesn't. That was really important. Shipping. Because the way that we had to go into a

second printing and the way we ended up with a lot of book sales. A group that made curriculums for catholic schools made some huge orders from us and figuring out how to ship large orders and how to price them correctly and all that, is just hard if you've never done it before. And it's just stressful to be like here's this box of precious expensive things their very heavy. They take them and they just throw them around, you take them, and you have to double box them. It's complicated.

9. Do you decide on how everything looks and turns out? or do you outsource work? For example, book covers?

We decided together and my partner helped us lay it out. We chose the font, which is a Garamond font, and this is a funny thing that I will recommend that you think about also when you're picking a font. Garamond is a beautiful font, type face, and it looks really good in this book in terms of it looks kind of old school, which is great, but it does the Q's really weird. Normally that wouldn't be a big deal. You don't have a lot of capital Q's in most books. This book has a Queen in it that is like a main character so it's kind of everywhere. The Queen doesn't come in till later. But as I was reading it later and I was like oh that breaks up the lines a little bit. Also, when we went into the second printing we had to decide if we were going to change the typeface. Changing the typeface means you have to reconfigure everything. I think we stayed with it because it wasn't that bad.

I like the design stuff that's fun to me. So, with the cover, cause the original cover we didn't have it anymore it was like a dust jacket. We didn't have the dust jacket and the book itself just has a dark green cover. And anyway, the dust jacket picture is a picture of the princess and the dragon hugging in a heart made of flowers. Which might have been more suitable to a children's book, but I thought it was too babyish. Because it's a paperback we wouldn't have been able to put the end papers in, I really thought that they were beautiful, so we scanned them. There were some tears and I had to recreate parts of it, and it was fun it was like restoration work. That's not something I've ever really done before but it's really a lot of fun. I liked designing this book I liked ya know figuring this out. I'm pleased with the way it turned out. I'm a person who makes visual stuff, I really liked that. The reason why we're successful at all in terms of money and having the company be self-sustaining is that we didn't spend any more except for on the printing.

10. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with bookstores?

What we didn't do was work with a distro. Which we could have, we priced it so that we could work with a distro if we wanted to. I took the book to like a few bookstores and had them carry it. Consigning anything is a pain you have to keep going back, it's not like their getting in touch with you. In the beginning actually there was a while when we were working with a small bookstore who would just buy several books and sell them on Amazon as well as in the bookstore and he would just call me when he needed more books, that was great. In general consigning with a bookstore it's a good way to get the book out there. I think if you have a book that doesn't sell itself automatically on the internet it's probably something you should do. But I've always found it a little bit more trouble than it's worth. Having a distro also like having a company that actively works with bookstores and works with chains and things to get the book out there and into the public eye is what a lot of publishing companies do and what we would have done if the book didn't just sell itself. They do take a large cut, so that's another thing to think about, spend all this money making the book and then the bookstore takes a cut and if you if a distro to sell the book to the bookstore the distro takes another cut so you only end up with a very small sliver. Which is

why we are hesitant to work with a living author who we would want to make sure that we were making money for and stuff like that, which we don't know how to do.

11. What kind of advice would you give someone that wanted to open their own press or publish their own work?

Don't expect anything out of it except for personal satisfaction. I think this is advice that everybody gets, but if you really love the work, like if you're really like I want to see this published then you're always going to succeed if you publish it, because then it will be published. I think if the goal is financial stability, I think it's going to be hard out the gate and so I would say make sure you have a project that you're like really passionate. Make sure that your working with people that you trust and care about. Even if they aren't good businesspeople, that they are also going to be committed to your project.

Interview: Antoinette De Alteriis

1. Where are you from? How did you get your job at Pelican Publishing? How long have you been working here?

I was born in Huston, Texas and my dad was here working for Higgins Boat in the late 50s and early 60s. I was christened here at St. Mary's but my family moved to the east coast quickly after that so when I came back here I moved from Newport News, Virginia and arrived on June 27th 2005, a significant year as we all know. I was the general managing director for Ripley's Believe It or Not in the French Quarter. My family arrived with two cats, after traveling cross-country, August 1st and of course we evacuated on the 27th.

My friend actually worked here. I had worked in the book industry before I went into theme parks and my friend Amy Kirk worked here before she left, but she knew that I was doing freelance work and she knew that I had a writing background. I was looking for something part time or full time. She was having lunch with our publisher's daughter and said, "Are you interested?" and I talked to Kathleen on the phone and then came and interviewed with her father who was alive at the time. I was hired and started on April Fool's day 8 years ago. So, we actually changed my start day to March 31st.

I had been with Walden Books and Boarders for 13 years as a regional buyer and training manager and of course running stores, but also setting up new stores in assistant to the district manager. So, I had done a lot of that before and worked in the book industry on the retail side, both in buying and selling, so I actually knew pelican books although I didn't know pelican as a publishing house, I knew their books. Because they distribute through Ingram and I worked with Ingram and bought books from Ingram. So, it was kind a weird thing when I got here how many books I had on the shelf that were Pelican Books. One of my son's favorites, Texas Night Before Christmas, is a Pelican book.

2. What kinds of abilities do you look for in potential employees? What kind of experience do you want them to have?

I think a valuable experience, in our department anyway, because our department is called the Promotion Department and its PR, Marketing, and a Publicist that's writing as well as marketing. In our department I find that the most valuable experiences for our interns and employees are some type of retail background or a customer service background because we deal so closely with clients both internal and external, whether they are our authors, media outlets, bloggers or reviewers, we are constantly dealing with people. Someone who only has writing experience while lovely usually does not have the interpersonal skills that we need. My most successful employees have had experiences where they have had to either work for a large group of people, like Drew actually worked in a law office and Johanna had worked in both retail and in a marketing office. So, having that experience where they literally have to interact with lots of different personalities and at the same time make them all happy that's much more valuable than the rest of it. The second skill that they need to have is an ability to put aside ego. Because we have to write in the voice of the publishing company, I don't like all the books I write about, but I have to promote them as if I do and I have to write in the voice of the people that wrote the book when we're writing flap copy of dusk jacket copy and that is a really hard skill for people to transition into.

3. Compared to when you first began your career, what things would you say you've learned that have given you a lot more experience with Publishing?

How long it takes to make a book. We think about books being these things that we pick up at a bookstore or order online and they are in our hand. But the reality is Children's books in particular are some of the hardest books to write and that's not the perception of people. They're like well it's less than a thousand words you can write this easy and that's not true. The process requires so many hands, even in a self-published book. I find that people who self-publish books also need to learn this lesson that having other eyes look on it is more important, I mean I write something but it's never finished when I finish it, there are at least 3 or 4 different sets of eyes that look at it and say "Oh maybe this would sound better this way, or you missed this punctuation." And that's why we have so many people in the process and that was a big learning curve for someone who was used to being sort of autonomous or at the top of the totem pole. That's why I have this sign here "Don't attach yourself to the outcome. No Ego." Because it's going to get altered obliterated and sometimes I don't agree with the changes, sometimes I'll fight for the changes, and sometimes I won't. Sometimes you have to let go of it and that was a big lesson to just let go of the final outcome and be willing to accept what the group project is, and I think that translates to a lot of different careers as well.

My friend Chris Smith is the programming director for the Jefferson parish library, and he's done several programs on self-publishing and brought in people, I

publisher was just on a panel in fact. One of the things they talked about is Cover Design and Editing. Don't think you can do it yourself. You are not that good, no one is that good. You get too close to the project, which happens on both sides. We have an art director here and we have an art review where every department gets together, editorial, sales, and Promo get together and look at the art beforehand. Things that we bring up and sales bring up are different. We may bring up diversity and the current trends, or the age level of the book is juxtaposition to how the characters look. While sales will bring up topics in books that are trending and whether or not there is a market for this. And the Art director will bring up the colors and palette of the book. Those are things that we have to take into consideration when we are looking at a book to put out for the public. They can hire all of those things but the service that we provide as a publishing house is that we pay for all of that and there is no risk to the author.

The distribution channels are different now with self-publishing you can pretty much be guaranteed, especially if you go to create space, which I don't recommend anybody do because Amazon has so much stuff written into their contracts, but that's on Amazon and you can do it the next day. I mean your book is out there, it's ready. Say it's on Amazon, say that you did create space, which I don't knock it, there are many books on create space that no publishing house would touch. But there are books on create space that get a start there that then go to a traditional publishing contract because they find that they don't want to do all of it. Say you do a book on create space and you put it on amazon, well it's not going to be in your local bookstore because your local bookstore doesn't buy from amazon, that's their direct competitor. Candace Huber has a program with Ingram Spark, which is sort of a self-publishing but like an indie publishing thing. She runs a contest and she helped them to get into the Ingram Spark and then that's distributed so that indie bookstores can buy it. Which is a great program, we've seen books that would not see air in other ways go through Ingram. Through their self-publishing program, which is, way more developed than Amazon's.

Another good example of that is Alys Arden who did *Casquette Girls*. She originally did her writing on Wattpad. So, she did her story on Wattpad, which is an open source program, and everybody kind of contributes his or her thing, and she wrote slowly, but the thing is its open source, so she no longer owns. But she got so much interest in the book and so many fans that she got a publishing house interested in it. They came to her and said would you be interested in publishing. She talks about this at the Tennessee Williams festival, she was so excited, "Great my books is written and it's going to get published!" and they're like well not exactly you have to rewrite at least 75% before we can publish, so the book that you bought is not the book she published on Wattpad it's her rewrite. She was very excited about and she did it but then of course she had to rewrite the book and, in the rewriting, she changed some of the things and people got upset from Wattpad but she is a real model of what self-promotion can do for someone.

One of the things that are changed dramatically in the book industry in the last ten years is how involved the author has to be in the promotion process. It's totally different. I mean when I started out in publishing, it's now been 20 something years, actually maybe 30 years, that's a scary thought. When I started out in book publishing in 1988 Authors went on a book tour very rarely but mostly it was all about what the publishing company did. They did print advertising, they did radio, they had book tours and so they did all of that and now publishing houses, except for their top authors they don't do anything, there is no budget. It's all social media or whatever the author is doing which is a big difference.

4. How do your different departments work together? How are teams usually split? (Ex. A Seasoned Member, New Employee, and an Intern) How would you describe the team of people you work with?

It's different in every house. In this publishing house we split things, so we have the editorial, we have the promotion department which is PR, marketing, and publicist, we have the sales department which does author signings and anything related to money, and then we have the production department that does typesetting and cover design and then we have the publisher and a Wrights person and then we have accounting and IT. The process is we find stories that are interesting: For instance, I'll use a particular book. Several years ago, at the Tennessee Williams festival the publisher Kathleen and I met Bryan Tyce and his partner Greg Coleman. I met them first and then I introduced them to Kathleen. They own the apartment that Tennessee Williams stayed in, in the French Quarter. Bryan is a trained chef he has been to the culinary institute, he has been to French culinary schools, and he is a stay at home husband. He is fascinated by cooking and he had this plan to do the infinite feast. Entertaining New Orleans by the season in the foods that are typical New Orleans foods and sort of a retro vibe.

I thought it was an interesting project and so he cooked a couple of things and I went to a couple of parties that he hosted, we talked about it back and forth for a year, I talked about it to Nina and you would have to really see a hook, she is our editor and chief and it's her and Kathleen's decision what books come in. I thought it was really interesting and she told me to look into it and so a year later he comes back and says, "So here is how this idea is developing, here's a sample of a chapter and here is what I'm thinking of doing with illustrations and a real retro vibe." So, he talks to Kathleen and she asked him to submit an idea. This is already a year into the process, so he put together a sample chapter with an overview and a couple of recipes and sent a query letter to our editor and chief and submitted it. It was logged in and then it was discussed between our editor and publisher they put it into the process for an evaluation and at that point we assign evaluations to full time staff. We evaluate the authors capability to promote, the market feasibility of the book, whether there are other books on the market, whether the content is engaging enough to make sales, John specifically looks at who he could sell it to, we specifically look at how would we write copy, who could do the endorsement quote, what facet would make this intriguing, okay so that's another three months in the process.

Then that evaluation is presented to the full board in front of the publisher and she asks if we want to move forward, in this case we recommended to move forward, and she wanted to see more of it to see what made it different from any other New Orleans cookbook. So, he submitted more. The editor and publisher met, and they decided to move forward. At that point the rights person got involved and she created a contract and the contract was issued to the author and the author then evaluated on his end, which was another month or so, then the author signed, and we counter signed and then we created an ISBN. The editor and chief assigned it ISBN number, which was assigned by the library of congress. We have to buy and ISBN number and create it and the rights go to the author but the rights for publishing go to us and its assigned to us and now it is public domain information that this book has been contracted by us. Then our sales department enters all of the information into a database and its uploaded through a program called Onyx which is a French program amazingly that everyone in the united states and many places across the world use to upload that information to databases around the world that say this is a book.

Then our production department got into it and said okay we need an idea for the cover. We still don't have the cover yet and that book is now going to be a 2020 spring title. So now we're already two and a half years into this process and already three departments have been involved. Production is now working on it there is an artist that's doing the illustrations plus the photographs they all have to be submitted and they have been submitted. The author then had to do a bio so now our department gets involved again. He submitted the author's packet we evaluated to make sure we had all the information to write the dust jack copy, to write an official bio, to write the marketing copy for the catalog, there are ten pieces of copy that have to be written for every book that gets distributed. Then as part of that we create sell sheets and that's what the sales departments use to start talking to distributors, so now sales will get into that, probably in September of this year. They will submit to Barnes and Nobel, Ingram, Baker and Taylor, Amazon, and the Indie distributors and they will say, "Hey this book is valuable we want to place this in here, this is what we think it's comparable to." So, they do their own research and they do that part. Now the other part of that is the IT department because we have to create profiles in all of these things, the IT department is responsible for uploading photo images of the author and the cover which we don't have the access to do or the software. Every single department is involved in the process to get the book to the publisher. Because the production department also has to div out the paper, which paper prices have escalated in the last few years because it's such a high priced commodity and they have to purchase six months in advance and estimate how much we are going to need for the various books we are printing. We use overseas printers for color printing because their prices are better. So now we've got the accounting department in the process because we negotiate deals.

When a person does a self-published book, they've left out so much of it. Say we get all of those departments in the process and get it all to the publication point and the book arrives, and you can see that Kevin is actually looking at cover designs

today, he is debating is it a blue gray or an orange gray or a yellow gray for the background, or none of them. All of these processes take time and they all have so many little components to it, and we aren't a big staff in a big house there are full departments that do this thing. Like the art director wouldn't actually do the cover design at Random House they have an entire department that does nothing but cover design and they submit it for approval and they may submit 3 different versions and Random House actually for bigger books has a panel that they will submit the covers to and have the panel discuss it. Chronicle is smaller and they are a little bit larger than us and they have a three-person department that does graphic designs and then they submit the covers to the publisher. So many people in the process and its different in every house. Say the book makes it in, say we just received the book at that point there are really only three departments still involved in it, because editorial is out of it unless there is a change to the book, which happens, so then it's just us functioning as a marketing department at that point, and sales functioning as assigning agent and then the accounting department with the orders. So at that point we are down to just a couple of people and in our house we assign each book to an editor, we have two editors, so each editor will take sole responsibility for a book and in our department we've ended that process, we find that it works better to tag team it so that we have a better flow between the two of us. When there were more people in this department, we assigned one book to each publicist and then worked exclusively on that book and anything about that book went to them. That's traditionally the way most publishing houses do it, if they're smaller they tend to do everything.

5. Of the works you've published have there been a lot of opportunities to outsource. (Ex. Audible, Illustrated, Film opportunities, Editing, or Graphic Design)

We do outsource some things; we have editors that are work for hire. Particularly on books that are going to be intensive editing or for things that we need to do faster. Because we only have two editors and we do about 22 to 25 books a season, that's a lot of books. Sometimes we will outsource it for, typesetting not so much that's a little bit more difficult and for promotion no, sales though we do have contracted outside sales reps. So editorial mostly, but things that we have in translation, so we publish books in Spanish and French as well and we have translators for hire and sometimes since you have a Spanish book you want Spanish copy on the outside those get sent to a Spanish translator and actually we had a former intern who is of Spanish language that's her specialty. She actually did the last few that we did. She is actually a professional translator now.

6. How many submissions does the company get on a daily basis? Are there a lot of different mediums that come to you? (Ex. Scripts or Art)

The publishing house functions in two different ways, so we are a traditional publisher, we've been a company since 1926 under the ownership of this family since 1976, as a traditional publisher and by that we mean people submit a manuscript, we decide whether or not we are going to publish it, and we pay them

for that either in royalties or an advance against royalties or both and we incur the cost of publishing. That is a majority of what we do. But we also function as a self-publisher or what they use to call a vanity press, where someone will come to us with a script, or a family book, or a genealogy book, which is what we usually get genealogy book and family specific books, and they want to publish 50 copies for their family to document their history. So, at that point they pay us, they may provide the editing and cover design, or we may do it as part of fee program it just depends on what they want to pay for, and then we will publish it. That does two things for them, One, it allows them to get their book published in a way that's different from self-publishing generally for a better price, and generally most of the people that do that are local. But it also allows them to get an ISBN number and make it available for distribution. So say at some point down the way, say your family did a family cookbook and your family has a lot of people in your family and you paid for us to print 50 books and you got all of those 50 books and gave them out to everybody and now you got people who want to get the book and now someone saw the post on your blog from California and they want the book and now you come to us and say "hey would you be interested in publishing this?" and we would be hesitant because we have to sell so many copies, but if you want to print more we will make available through Ingram and then indie bookstores can order it. Kind of like the Ingram Spark program. So, your friend that saw it on your blog in California can order it.

Submissions for people wanting to do wanting to do those odds and ends things we probably get a couple a week, because we are a traditional publisher and they don't really look to us for that first. Submissions on the other side, some weeks are crazy some weeks are not, maybe 300 or so. It used to be more before people had so many self-publishing options, and that's a month. Nina would have a better ballpark number for you but when our interns are here one of the things, they have to do is return our slush-pile rejects, and that's like their worst thing because they return stacks. Our submission process requires a hard copy only, we don't take digital submissions, some houses do, but we don't take digital submissions, so they have to send it in and if they want it back they have to send a self-addressed stamped envelope to get it back. We send back those and some just tell us to throw it away.

There are also two types of submissions in publishing houses and one is solicited and the other is Over the Transom. Over the Transom is an old term; in doorways they use to have transom windows that open up and so people would throw in manuscripts as a submission, they would just toss it in and it's still an industry wide term, the younger people call it unsolicited, but if your thirty year or older it's over the transom. So those are the two types of submissions, solicited or over the transom. A solicited submission maybe someone sent us an email out of the blue and said, "Hey I'm thinking about writing a book about one of the musicians in New Orleans..." and we will send them back an email and say, "hey we would be interested in publishing that, when you get to that point here is what we need." And so that's a solicited manuscript. An unsolicited manuscript is someone that just sends his or her manuscript in with a query letter and they follow all the directions,

but we didn't know anything about it. It's interesting to see what people think is worth publishing, there are some things that never make it into the evaluation process because the editor takes one look at it and throw it in the trash.

7. As far as concerns with licensing how are things normally handled between author, publisher, and sometimes the illustrator?

All of those things are included in the original contract, and its different for every contract. There are some standard things, but it's different for every house. We deal with licensing so the copyright license for the actual book goes to the author or whomever the author designates and that's who gets the royalties. The only way to assign those royalties to someone else is for them to then send us a new contract saying we are going to addend the contract and now my grandchild is going to get the royalties. We have a book like that where the book is about her grandson and she wants the grandson to get royalties when she dies. For the illustration it could be two ways, if we hired an illustrator to just to work for hire, say Kevin has a book he is working on and he says I think I have an illustrator who would be interested in working on this and we just hire them for him, they aren't interested in promoting the book or having any long term relationship with it, we just pay him flat out and we own the rights to the art. Sometimes the artist will retain the rights to sell the artwork on their own, but when they work for hire, we own it outright. For an illustrator who is just contracted to illustrate the book they may choose to retain the rights to sell their artwork or not and then they get royalties on the book.

In terms of licensing agreements sometimes the author will retain, if they think they have a movie on their hands in advance they may already have a deal, we had a book like that a few years ago where she was already talking to a person who wanted to do a movie about her husband, and it's never come to fruition but he owns the outright rights of the movie and we get a royalty on it if he ever actually does it. Same thing for toys, some authors are very specific that they want to do a toy, they may retain the rights to that exclusively or they may negotiate with us that we own the rights and would incur the cost for doing it and they would get a royalty for it. There are some standards in the industry, there are several publishing universities and they talk about this in their rights and permissions.

8. How do you go about choosing a printing press to create your books? Do you have one that you use all the time? Or is it case-by-case?

That's really not me but the production department negotiates that. There are only so many printers, and there is more every day. In the United States, we call those domestic printers, and they have different turnaround times and then the foreign printers have a longer turnaround time, it's less expensive to print with a foreign printer because you can print at a higher volume but you have to be willing to wait, it's a three month turn around but the prices are much less. So, it's a matter of cost and time.

9. How does budgeting work within a particular novel or manuscript? Has budgeting ever been an issue or is it case-by-case?

Not so much. I mean we worry about the cost of printing the book. Advertising and is a whole different ball game and we handle that differently because we don't advertise any one book by itself. A lot of it is more of a cost analysis thing.

10. On the creative side of things, what aspect of publishing do you feel is the most enjoyable? What would you say is the hardest aspect to deal with?

Record keeping is the hardest aspect. I mean we are surrounded by paper, just the sheer amount of paper we have to keep track of. Even digitally I have something like 18000 emails in my email and I can't get rid of them because they are legal issues that we deal with on books. So that's the worst part. Now the most creative, I think it's different for every person who works in publishing. I find the most exciting part to be helping the author develop their identity whether that's part of the development of the book, so there are a lot of books that I brought to the house and I've gotten to work with, which is great because in some houses the editors are very hands on, In this house I'm very lucky to have been able to lend a hand in the process.

11. What things would you say have made your career easier over the years? And what has made it harder?

Well the answer is the same, Technology. In many ways technology has made things a lot easier, like now I don't have to hand write copy, that's an improvement and I can upload things or I can scan or OCR, so I can something and break it down into things I can edit, I can easily send a cover image. I'm not faxing which was crazy its not dial up so that's 30 years later. When I started, we had no computer access, you had Netscape was the first digital share drive that bookstores used and you had to be on a network which was separate cause there was no Internet. That was one of the first group networks, which is funny cause no one really remembers that the book industry was number two in getting connected to the internet.

Technology has made communication and the publishing process, now we digitally send them to the printers, we're not putting it in the mail and sending it to the printer. Which is what use to happen, you use to do this manuscript and do all of these things and then you would mail it to China, Singapore, or Malaysia, or Germany, Germany did a lot of art books. In hope that it got there, and they would copy it and create the books, now we just send a digital file and they download it goes right into their printers. That's great.

But at the same time technology has given a false impression of immediacy where people think oh well you can publish it tomorrow. Well you can publish my Mardi Gras book for February... and its December. Well no, no we can't. Or why can't you send me that book tonight so I can have for an interview tomorrow. No, we

can't. Aside from the problems with the expectations, technology has allowed piracy. Where it used to be that the only way for a book to get pirated was for someone to get a copy of it and literally copy it. Now they can grab it from a digital galley, they can steal it along the way as its being sent to someone else. There was a big case not too long ago where they were doing what was called splinter feeds so the publisher was emailing to their printer the files of the book but the hacker had done it so that it would duplicate send and it was sending it to somewhere in the middle east as well and they were printing the book as well and that's a copyright infringement. Technology has done the same thing for copyright infringement, it used to be you would have to literally read something on paper to find, but now there are plagiarism checks online.

12. Do you ever have to publish a book that doesn't represent your ideals?

Constantly. We publish civil war books. But again, that goes back to, I don't have to like the books we publish. Pelican was founded on an idea that we publish books that don't have a voice elsewhere, so we were publishing books on diversity, what are now called diversity titles, long before anybody else. We published the number one polish cookbook in the world. We publish some of the top books on southern philosophy, we publish books on the constitution, we publish books on civil war history, I mean history is history, whether you want to revise it or not it happened. There are a lot of publishers that no longer publish books on civil war, now I'm not talking fictionalized, editorialized, whatever, I'm talking here is the battle, here is how many people died, here is the impact it had on the state. We don't do adult fiction at all; we do Young Adult fiction and we don't do any LGBT books but we do books on controversial things for children. So we talk about adoption, we have several books that have been out for years, we have a new book on Alzheimer's, we have what we call issues related books, we have a book on Hiroshima and the children that were left in Hiroshima, we have a book about Katrina and the aftermath as a fictionalized book and history books. Then we have other books and your just like, "Why do we have this book?" But there are audiences that want to buy these book and if other publishers wont publish them then that's what we're here for and that was Dr. Kalhoun's whole philosophy was that he wanted to keep books accessible to people that were either going out of print or were not finding printers and that's what we do. That's what we've specialized in for almost 100 years now and it works.

13. How do you deal with controversy around a book? Do you have to negotiate whether it's worth dealing with the controversy or not?

When the incident happened with the young man that shot up all kinds of people on the east coast and they claimed that it was because the confederate flag influenced him. We had a book called Young Heroes of the Confederacy, which published like within two weeks of that, it had just come out before that and we had a children's picture book that was a Christmas book and it had a confederate flag on the front. There were people protesting saying that Amazon needed to pull down all

books with confederate flags on them, which I was happy to see that they didn't. But we had this children's picture book and the story in the picture book was a documented story of civil war soldiers who were stationed and they collected food and took it to the families in the area for Christmas because Christmas was not celebrated as a federal holiday, Lincoln actually declared it after the civil war. So there was no Christmas holiday and while Southern Soldiers tended to be more southern Baptist and they felt strongly about giving to people on this religious holiday and that's what this story was about these soldiers that took books to these families. But it basically dies we sold like 15 copies, but we had to actually make a statement and as a PR person that was a part of my training is crisis management and we had to make a statement and so many people were on social media they were slamming us, they were slamming other publishers with civil war books, I mean big publishers not just us.

I sent it out to our authors and said what would your response be, and we got back some pretty good responses and some were just rants, but we had one very educated response from a Harvard graduate, a New Yorker, who wrote a book and it was the Young Heroes of the Confederacy and he published that as a Facebook post and on twitter, Instagram wasn't around then, and we sent it out as a press release. Hers was like the voice of reason and it was used in many excerpts. We have a book done by a pastor it was years ago, and it's actually a book on marriage and he was recently defrocked because of pedophile, it was a civil suit, he was never legally convicted of the crime although it was settled in a civil suit. This woman contacted us, violent, smearing it every place she could put, like Facebook, she said "I can't believe your supporting a pedophile..." and I told her our policy, if they are convicted legally we will put the book out of print and take it down cause we aren't supporting, but he was never charged. We asked her to send us the information and we would keep track of it. However, he was never convicted. Conversely, we did have an author that was convicted of pedophilia, he was a cookbook author in the UK, and we took the book out of print and took it down.

A manuscript for a cookbook came in over the transom and we all loved it. We did everything for it to become a book. So, I send out a galley to the magazine that I thought would be a perfect fit. Turns out that the author interned at that magazine and did that manuscript as a part of her internship meaning that the magazine owned the rights to it. They sent us a cease and desist, and we had to give it up. It was a big blow to us, and we had to destroy the book.

14. What kind of advice would you give someone wanting to get into this industry?

Try it, do an internship, do a couple of internships, find out what you actually like about it. Not academically but actually doing it because the day-to-day work is different. I would say that a personality that's going to do very well in one area of publishing is not going to do well in another. It's a pretty solitary pursuit, and more so now that we have technology, because now you don't have to go to a conference

it's all-online your all listening in on a webcast you're not going places and publishing houses don't have money to send you places. So, my advice is doing an internship, Practice dropping your ego out of your writing. Find out what kind of books you like, do your research on publishers because not all publishers publish all things. There's a publisher that only publishes the Princess Bride and anything else by that author but that's it.

15. What do you wish happens for publishing? Your dream in publishing?

That we find alternatives to paper, because it's a resource that's not renewable. We try to renew paper, but we have outstripped the number. Alternatives to paper and I don't mean digital, because many people prefer to hold a book. A clear understanding of who profits from books. There is a big argument now between libraries and publishers about who should get paid. Authors don't get paid from people who check out library books. So how do you sustain your business if you're not getting any income.

Interview: Candace Huber

1. Where are you from? What was your childhood like? Have you always been into books?

So, I'm from here. I'm actually a sixth generation New Orleanian. Tubby and Coo are my grandparents. My childhood was not the best; I was bullied a lot when I was a kid. I have definitely always loved books. I used to escape into the library. I was one of those kids cause I was a big nerdy kid and you know when you're like a nerd child and you like to read that, at least back in the day, was not very popular and so I have definitely always loved books my whole life. I've been reading since I was like 2 and even when I was really little my mom says that she use to put me in a play pen and just put stacks of books in there when I was a baby and it would keep me occupied for hours and hours.

2. What led you to the decision of making this a career choice? Did you think it would be viable as a career?

So, really what led to this was just that I wanted to do it and I just did it. It's always funny when I get asked that question, cause it's like well I don't really know I just kind of like did it. It's something I've always wanted to do ever since I was a small child. I actually use to want to be a librarian and then as I got [to like age 10] yea I think I want to own a bookstore instead. So, it's just kind of been a life's dream of mine to just be around books all day every day. It's just what I've wanted to do and be involved in the book process. I had never worked in retail; I had never worked in a bookstore. I started off working in Human Resources and then I moved to IT, so right before I opened the store, I was an IT project Manager in healthcare. So, nothing really to do with anything, but I was like, "Ya know I've always wanted to do this, we kind of have the means to do it, let's just start looking." My husband was

like, "Yea like whatever you want to do." He is very supportive, so I just did it. That's really it as far as that goes.

As far as viable, obviously I thought it was viable when I opened the store, if I wouldn't have thought it was viable, I wouldn't have done it. I think what makes it viable or why it continues to be viable is because of the niche I created. There are a lot of stores that are general bookstores that are really good here in the city. I didn't really want to directly compete with any of them. I think that stores like this, ya know people come here because it is a certain type of thing. I think creating that niche of Sci-fi, Fantasy, Board game, Nerd folk thing has worked out really well for me and that's what makes it continue to be viable.

3. What inspired you to create your own press?

So, I am the kind of person that if I'm doing something, I want to be an expert at whatever I'm doing and so I've learned a lot about the book industry and selling books. I'm a writer as well, so I kind of had both ends of the spectrum from writing a book and the opposite end of the spectrum of selling them. But I didn't know anything about the middle of the spectrum, or very little about like actually how books get made and I just wanted to know because I want to know everything and I was like, "Well I can do this, I can publish books." Just like when I opened the bookstore I was like, "I never worked in retail, I never worked in the book industry, but I can sell books." So, it was kind of the same thing, "Oh I can publish books, Why not? I can figure this out." I really just wanted to figure it out, I talked to a bunch of Publishers and just went through the whole process and I did it because I wanted to know how to do it basically and I learn by just doing stuff. It went really well which is good.

4. What kind of advice would you give someone that wanted to open their own press or bookstore?

So, and I know I didn't talk a lot about the press. I'm just starting that so I don't really have much as far as what I would do differently or what I would do the same. That kind of stuff because it's just getting started and I think the best advice I could give somebody for that is research printers because that is the biggest hassle that I had to go through was with the printer, so make sure that you do really good research and kind of know what you're getting into with the actual printing. Everything else was pretty easy, easy to learn easy to do, ya know if you have the skills or hiring people. If you're not an editor, if you're not a book designer you can always get help with that stuff, but the printing, oh man. I would say from a press perspective researching printers would be good to do.

From a bookstore perspective, I don't know I think the best advice I could give anyone that wants to do any of this is like to do it. Don't be afraid, the worst that could happen is that it fails and you close. I don't know I feel like a lot of people want to do things but are too scared cause they're like what happens if I put all this

money into this and it closes? Well, what is the worst that could happen? You lose some money, but you did it. My best advice is like if you want to do it just do it, figure it out, you don't have to have the experience, I didn't you know, and I did it and I'm doing okay. I think if you have the passion then do it, but I would also say the other piece of advice is with any small business I think you have to have the passion because it becomes your entire life, literally 24/7 especially like me with multiple businesses this is literally all that I do, I don't have a social life, my house is a mess. I think if you get into any kind of small business just know what you're getting into. I know a lot of people say don't turn your hobby or your passion into a career because then you'll start to hate it after a while, and I haven't found that that's true like to me it's what keeps me going. Like on the days when I get burnt out, that's what keeps me going because I am so passionate about. But it is a lot of work and it is your whole life. I think those are the two best pieces of advice would be: Do it if you want to do it but know what you're doing and know what you're getting into and know that you won't have life for a while maybe ever.

5. Can you tell me about your educational history? Where you went to school? What did you major in?

So, my college bachelor's degree is in English and Communications, so I guess it's sort of similar. I studied literature and writing, I had a very strong back up in public relations, it was basically as second major. I did not go to grad school or anything though, so I don't have a Masters. Kind of sort of related but not exactly.

6. What would you consider to be your dream job in this field?

That's a really good question; I think that I am already doing it I think that this is what I've always wanted to do. It's maybe a little bit different from what I've always thought and dreamed, cause you know when you're a kid and you dream about working in a bookstore, you don't dream about work, you dream about being around books and reading book all day, which is obviously not what it is. But I absolutely love it and so I think that between the book selling and all the events that I do and the publishing and the podcast that I do, ya know, I now am just doing whatever I want to do. I think the only other thing is that I have always wanted to write a book, when I was a kid as well that was the other thing, I wanted to be around books and a best-selling author, those were the two things. The only sort of dream thing that I haven't done yet is write a book, so that would be the next thing if I ever get the time.

Bonus: If you wrote your book what would it be about?

That's a really good question. I have had a lot of ideas for books. I've wanted to do children's books so I have ideas to do children's books; I have a bunch of pets, I have six of them and so I have always thought it would be really interesting to do children's books about my pets and I have bunch of ideas for that. Then I have ideas for two different novels that have been milling around for a long time. One of them,

which I will never write probably, was Katrina just like everyone kind of just like processing everything that happened. The one that I will write, at some point, I like writing for processing and so it is a sort of Sci-fi/Fantasy book to process my past trauma and I think it will be really interesting because when you go through trauma especially as a child you break off pieces of yourself and so I think Sci-fi/Fantasy is a great genre to kind of show that and how that happens to you. So that would be the other one I'm kind of working on.

7. What's been your best-selling title?

Of all time? Oh man, wait a minute I can tell you; I have reports that show this. I know some of my top sellers. So, the Children's book Trombone Shorty is my best-selling book of all time, apparently. Followed by The Ocean at the End of the Lane by Neil Gaiman, and Ready Player One by Ernest Kline and The Fifth Season by NK Jameson are tied for third place and then very close behind that with like one book less than third place is The Casket Girls by Elise Arden, I do sell a lot of that. Those would be for adults The Ocean at the End of the Lane, Ready Player One, The Fifth Season, and The Casket Girls would be my four best-selling books.

8. What was the biggest challenge that you didn't see coming? As opposed to what has been the most gratifying moment.

This is a really interesting question. So, the most challenging thing, I mean I didn't know anything about any of this when I started so really, I didn't see any of it coming. I guess, well I mean the business stuff I knew, right cause I was a project manager and I worked in HR so like I knew a lot about the business side of things which is why I thought I could do it. I'm trying to think of like the most challenging thing I think has been trying to move with my customer base if that makes sense, because trying to figure out what people want and stuff like that is always I think the most consistently challenging especially when I do events like I go to Comicon. What do I think people are going to buy? I don't know I have to take shots in the dark. That's how it is too with inventory in general It's like I'll just order what I think people might buy and see how it goes. So, I think the curating which is also the most fun for me is consistently the most challenging trying to figure out just trends and what people are actually going to want. I thought that would be easy because I am a nerd and I am my base and so I just kind of thought it would be easy to know what nerds might want, but it's a lot more complicated than that and so I think that would be the most challenging thing that I didn't anticipate cause I thought that would be the easiest part and its definitely not.

That's a hard one, I think I've had a lot of gratifying moments, I think the ones that are the most gratifying are when people come in and this is their happy place this is their safe place because that's really what I set out to create because I was the kid who hid in the library and in places and that's where I felt safe and so if I can provide that to someone else I think those are the most gratifying moments. When people come in here and they are like, "Oh this is my happy place." Or like, "Oh I love

this store so much.” Ya know like little kids who come in here and they know my name and their like, “Oh Candace I’ve been looking forward to see you again.” Those are the moments that it’s like, “Yea I do this because of that.” Because of people who like it and know that they can come here and be happy.

9. Is there anything that you would do different since you started in this business? What are the things that you would keep the same?

What would I have done or do differently? I think that I would have gone all in on my niche earlier when I first opened I did some more general things as well because I didn’t know what people were going to want and so I had like a Romance section for example and you know some different things that just literally sold nothing out of them and so I should have trusted my gut more from the beginning and just done what I really wanted to do instead of trying to feel out customers, although it’s not a bad thing that I did that. But I think, I do think trusting my gut more and going all in on what I really wanted to do from the beginning would have worked out a little bit better and I also think that inventory management, which from what I hear is a struggle sort of across the board, from the beginning would have put some sort of process in place for like returning books that have been sitting around for too long and stuff like that to turn my inventory a little bit quicker. Mostly things have been working out, I’ve had some changes here and there but as far as staying the same, doing the nerd thing has been working for me really well I will keep doing that until it doesn’t work anymore. I think that probably also I do less big giant events now than I use to do but mostly I think ya know as far as staying the same the mix of what I have now the events that I do now I think the nerd stuff is working out pretty well over all.

Interview: LB Kovac

1. Where are you from? What was your childhood like? Have you always been into books?

Technically I was born in Monroe, Louisiana. Like Northeast Louisiana, I grew up there. My grandparents owned a farm and we would help them, and I went to school in Monroe. I pretty much have always been into books. My grandmother was a Special Ed teacher and she taught me how to read when I was like three or four. There was this series of books called “I Can” that I was super excited about and she taught me how to read with those. My favorite book was “The Lorax” by Dr. Seuss and I read a ton of Dr. Seuss books growing up. So, I’ve always liked books, I’ve always liked reading. I remember in elementary they had Accelerated Reader. I went home recently, and my dad found my trophies. I had one pretty much every year for being in the top ten students. So, I was always a very avid reader.

2. Can you tell me about your educational history? Where you went to school? What did you major in?

I went to LSU for my undergrad from 2009 to 2013. My major was technically English Creative Writing with a concentration in Fiction. I minored in Art History, which is not super relevant to what I'm doing but is still pretty cool. It helps every now and then when examining a painting. I did a Thesis in undergrad since I was going through Honors College and did a creative thesis that was a novella. My master's degree was through University of New Orleans I went through, technically a theater art major, but their creative writing workshop. I did a creative thesis for that as well which was a collection of short stories.

3. What led you to the decision of making this a career choice? Did you think it would be viable as a career?

I guess when I was going through undergrad I kind of had it in the back of my mind that it would be really cool to work with books in some way. Of course you get a lot of people having conversations with you as you're going through the program about how books especially like print, any sort of print not just books, like magazines, newspapers, journals, use to be super popular and super important to the way people were consuming information but now most people consider that on the decline. So most people that I was going through the program with, other students and also teachers, would say it's incredibly difficult to get into publishing, very few people who are in school are going to be able to make a career out of it, be able to devote themselves full time to it. In the back of my mind I wanted to do it, but also was like I need to think about other career options as well. I ended up going into the master's program, for a bunch of reasons, but also when I was looking at jobs it seemed like you were going to be a more desirable candidate if you had a master's degree, it would up your chances essentially for getting positions, so that was in the back of my mind too.

Although I just really loved writing and kind of wanted to explore where that was going. It took me a while I graduated with my master's degree in 2016 and I was applying for positions with publishing houses both in our area and other places, which Louisiana is not a huge state as far as publishing goes. We don't have a lot of publishers. LSU press and Pelican Press are probably the biggest ones and then like a bunch of Universities have their own presses like ULL and ULM. But there isn't like a big trade publication in Louisiana. I started applying to like Atlanta and Tennessee, like Nashville and Memphis is where as far as the south goes the big trade publications are. Then some stuff in Texas to, I like the being around books more than like being around trade books part of it. I applied for a bunch of jobs and didn't really get anything for a while, went into marketing which for like the past two years or so, before I got this, I was working as a marketing manager and a social media manager. When you're trying to get into publishing what most people think is editorial so either you're the person who is editing the book or you're the person that's trying to acquire the book at some stage, like talking to potential authors and things like that. That's the most desirable part of publishing, but also the most difficult to get into, cause there's more people competing for positions, so I talked to some people and they were like diversify a little bit, ya know think about other

aspects of working for a publishing house or working for a press or something like that. I started doing stuff like work for agencies or working in different parts in the press. My official title is publicist and copy coordinator, so the publishing side of it is definitely more marketing focused, I'm the person who is like responsible for promoting the book on social media and promoting the book in person too. But then the copy coordinator part is the part where I actually get to do something with the book. I write the jacket copy for it.

4. How did you get your job at LSU Press? What were the requirements?

They mentioned this several times while I was in the interview for this position, so while I was at UNO I interned at UNO Press and the fact that I had done anything at a press before, the people who were interviewing me really like the fact that I was at least somewhat familiar with the processes of taking a book from a manuscript to a finished product, they were super enthusiastic about that. Also being a publicist and the fact that I had a marketing background and had done some publicity even if it wasn't to the extent that they were asking for in the position. They liked that I had a writing background as well, most people coming into publicity jobs are from marketing or journalism, those are like two very different styles of writing, as far as creative writing goes, creative writing is more in line with what is in the book I think than most people would learn in journalism or marketing like if they went through a traditional background to get a journalist or marketing position.

As far as requirements for the job, so most of the positions that I would apply for even though I am a little bit further like a little bit older than them, most of them are going to be entry level stuff so they're not looking for a ton of experience, like work experience, like I said it was important that I worked at a press before, some of them wanted you to have had internships at a press or in a position that was really similar to that, so maybe if you worked at a magazine or something like as an editorial intern, which that was another thing that they like too, after I worked at UNO press I worked at a magazine here in Baton Rouge for a little bit, a lot of the positions I looked at they wanted you to have a lot of contacts in the publishing world, so either you know some people that work at other presses, you knew authors that are really big into writing who they could potentially buy manuscripts from, or could set up contracts. A lot of them that I looked at for big places, like Penguin Random House or Simon and Schuster, liked people who were bilingual, especially Spanish. Another thing I noticed was that they liked if you had permissions experience, if you had done some sort of law or legal type internship. Because that is a big part of publishing that I had never thought about before. Like deciding whether or not the content in a book an author has permission to publish like the pictures or maybe facts or something like that.

5. What would you consider to be your dream job in this field? Or are you doing that?

I either would really really like to work with a company that focuses on children's books or YAs or one that does more graphic stuff like comic books or graphic novels.

Well when I was in undergrad I did a thesis, not my creative one, but ones for my other classes were centered on child psychology and the way that people represent children in children's books and the kind of material that we are giving children to consume and kind of what that teaches them in these kind of formative years about themselves and what they should think about life and things like that.

Personally, I just think it's really important that the kinds of books that you give children kind of represent, like ideologically represent the person that you want them to be. So it's kind of a mantle that I want to take up to a certain extent, I want to be involved with the process of like making material that will turn children into good well rounded human beings that are concerned with humanity and want to do good in the world and that sort of thing. I care about what kids are reading and how it affects them. The graphic novel thing, well my masters was in the autobiographical graphic novel, so I've read a ton of it and it's a really interesting field and it's kind of on the up and up. It's just a really interesting field and I would like to be involved in it.

6. What was the biggest challenge that you didn't see coming when you started working? As opposed to what has been the most gratifying moment.

I guess, before I got the position, I didn't expect for it to take such a long time for me to get a position. There are a ton of people after what is becoming fewer and fewer jobs in this field. Also, it's partially Louisiana, like I said we don't have a lot of publishing companies, so the positions are few and far between. As far as once I got into the job, with any position there is a certain amount of tedium involved, there is a lot of like keeping track of what you're doing and why you're doing and when it happens just because there are so many people involved in every step of the process. That you have to like to verify that you submit a jacket copy on time and verify things, that's not my favorite part. I've only been working for 3 months so I'm still kind of new. With any job there is some tedium.

The most gratifying part was like since I've worked her for a little bit and started actually writing the jacket copy for stuff, so we had one of the books printed, I remember the first book that I was involved in the whole part of the process, or my whole part of the process. I had to create the jacket copy, write it, get it approved, get it on the jacket, go through the stages of verifying the jacket rounding it through all these different steps. SO that was really gratifying once I was able to hold the finished book in my hand and look at it and like I helped do this thing this is great. I contributed to this that was a special moment.

7. Is there opportunity to move around or change what you're doing? Do you even want to?

Somewhat, I know the person who use to be in my position still works with the press and she ended up going into editorial. There does seem to be some opportunity for changing around I think though, long term I would probably have to move somewhere

else to further my career. (Location is everything.) Like I said there is Atlanta, Nashville, Memphis, Huston, New York, the five biggest cities for this sort of thing. Like I said I want to do that's more related to children's books or graphic novels and those are not things that LSU press are particularly interested in. Most of the books at LSU press have to do with Civil War history, which is an interesting subject, but like dream job I would almost definitely move somewhere else.

8. What are the advantages and disadvantages of working with an established publishing company?

LSU Press is not super big, we do 80 titles or so a year, the compartmentalization aspect of things is definitely a great advantage to it. You have someone that is going to be the editor, you have me in the marketing side, production and graphic design so like you don't have to think about every part of it. Also, you working as part of a team so pretty much everything go through at least two or three sets of hands before it ends up on the finished books. People will catch mistakes or have different ideas about things. As an example we had this book and we were trying to figure out what the cover design should be and the graphic designer that we had was really stumped and she was like "I've read the book, I understand the idea behind it, but I'm just not coming up with anything good" she had shown us a couple of mock ups and nobody was really satisfied with it. So, we had floor task 1 meetings which are like a group meeting which everyone in every department goes over what they're doing, and someone in editorial, so not production, not graphic designer, pitched this idea that ended up being what we used as the book cover design. It's nice having those extra voices in every step of the process.

Then also if yourself publishing not only do you have to think of everything yourself, you're the only person who is invested in it, you're putting your money up so if it doesn't go well then you're losing your money, so like if you're going through a press even if it doesn't go particularly well you have something to fall back on cause there are other books that are doing well and you aren't losing your money.

9. What kind of advice would you give someone that wanted to join the publishing world and get a job?

When I was applying for things like I said I was always focused on going into editorial, which is the most popular aspect of it, So I would say for someone who is interested in publishing, think about the other departments the other roles that you can have in publishing. I very easily could have gone to school for graphic design or marketing and I think that would have made the process easier or shorter in some way. Because there are less people competing for those jobs, just in a practical sense there are more positions and less people competing for them. So that's something to think about there is marketing, graphic design, acquisitions, you can go into legal and check permissions. Also, not just books magazines, journals, trade publications, comic books, there are also publishers that only do E books. There are lots of ways that you can just get involved and still spread your love of books with everyone.

Also, all the positions that I got a call back for, they really liked how diverse my background was, ya know I didn't just go to school for writing and do everything in writing they liked the fact that I did some marketing and had some managerial experience. Then also I did copywriting, fact checking, work for a magazine, work for a press, that sort of stuff. As far as the specific position that I got they liked that I had worked in Adobe Creative Suite, so like Photoshop illustrator and design. Laying out the books itself, the cover, and other things.

Interview: Terry Sykes-Bradshaw

1. Where are you from? Have you always loved writing? Did your childhood inspire you to become a writer?

In a word yes. I grew up in Michigan, as did Kathy. I guess I just always loved to write. In fact when my mom would take us to church my sister and brother would sit there with their little pads of paper and play cross word and I would write stories, I have no idea about what, but I think I was pretty much always the heroine. Then I progressed from doing that just always writing and writing then high school for the yearbook, for the paper, and creative writing classes. College I wanted to major in creative writing, but I transferred from a small school in Ohio to the University of Michigan where that was not offered back then, so I kind of got deflected but yea I've always written. I'm happiest when I am writing.

2. I know you've written several works, and I want to know how you came to the decision to publish your own works?

Well just like a lot of writers there is the control issue, where you write something, and nobody tells you that you can't if you publish it yourself. Like if you have a publisher they are like, oh well I don't like that title, I don't like that chapter, I don't like this event, so there was that. But also my first book which was *The Awful Truth About Dead Men*, I started it kind of when we moved from Michigan to Ohio and I worked in newspapers so I worked as a newspaper editor, when we moved I didn't have a job and I thought, Hmm, okay, I really don't want a job. I'm really just going to do stuff right now, play a lot of tennis, do a lot of jazzercise, and when you move some place new people say, well what do you do? They always want to know what your career is, so I said I was a writer and they said, what are you writing? And I said, Hmm I'm writing a book. Okay now self-fulfilling prophecy, I also knew that if I was writing a book, they couldn't say well you know in a week, So did you get that book done? So, you know it was kind of a thing I wanted to do but by saying I was going to do it, it kind of became something that was actually happening. At the time I started it I really had no expectation of anything really and I use to say back when I use to work for the newspaper, I'm really good at starting and really bad at finishing. A book is long you have to have a beginning, a middle, and an End. And the end part is the hard part.

So it took me when I was writing that first book, I would go through periods of being super dedicated and super into it and then take a 3 month sabbatical and we would travel,

I had two little kids, I didn't devote myself as much but once I got it going then I would do it. So, all in all I think from start to publishing was like 10 years so having invested that much time in it I thought oh let's take the easy way out. Not to mention that pitching a book and writing a query letter and everything else seemed almost more difficult than actually writing the book. It was just overwhelming. I think I sent the first one maybe to a couple of people, but you always have to send it to a million. Then there is getting an agent and back then, which was about 2009 I think, they were like Oh if you don't have an agent forget it don't talk to any publishers. I think in the publishing industry the fact that you always have to have an agent to even be able to unlock the front door, let alone walk through makes it daunting. That to me is the huge step, I mean the control I want to do what I want to do is one thing, but to have to go through an agent and a publisher I thought a bit much. Then when I go back and look at all the books published by "real publishers" I think my books are as good as that, I mean why didn't I do that? I think I didn't do that because I was lazy and overwhelmed and lacking self-confidence. By the time I got to the third book however I have come a long ways in my thinking because now when you go to a writers conference and you talk to all these people, and a lot of them are into self-publishing for just the whole reason that they want to be in charge of the book, how its marketed, the cover, everything, and they want to get all the money back.

3. What would you say is the work you're most passionate about having published or just written in general?

Well I like my third book the best, finding Maggie, I think it's the best of the three books; a lot of people have liked it. By the time I got around to that I was working with a guy David Brawler, of Brawler books, this is new to publishing also. Cause there use to just be a vanity press and then we got into self-publishing. The hybrid kind of thing where I pay him a whole bunch of money, but he finds everybody to do everything. He finds everything from soup to nuts I'm paying him, but I don't have to go out and find those things. But the first book I was my own contractor, my own business which is called Palespin Inc. for that one I had to contract out everything, here is another thing for publishers, we did our own editing, and you can't, you cannot do your own editing there is no way that you ever catch everything. I don't even thing professionally edited books catch everything, but when you write something and you're reading it you will see what you had in mind to write not necessarily what's there on the page, so there was that. My second editor was terrible and then the third one I went with David and he was great I mean he did everything and I like him a lot and he was perfect as far as that is concerned, except I had to pay him a lot of money, which you know I don't get back. Then we get to step number 3, which is marketing, and I am horrible. I don't want to do it. I don't like to do it. I don't want to do the business end of it. The whole reason I'm not a huge success, why I'm not a huge financial success is because I don't like that end of it. Here's the thing too. It's kind of a myth that the publisher will help you with that. If your small and you're the low man on the totem pole, they basically expect you to go out and do your own marketing, your own selling, and your own pushing, sure there is a little in your pocket for doing that, but for the most part you have to sell your own book. If you don't have a name you slide under the radar and sure they published your book, which is great, but it's

a catch 22 because they only market big name books and the only way to get a big name and get your book out there is to have a big name.

4. How would you describe the process of self-publishing your own written work?

I was a real newbie at it, so of course I didn't really know what I was doing. I would say in a word Self-publishing is frustrating. Because you don't know what you're doing and your trying to fight your way through, especially your first book and I can't even remember. I found a printer who then sort of said oh we can do the a la cart different features so we'll print your book, but if you want to get an editor we can put you with one or you can edit yourself, we'll give you a cover designer's name and you can contact them and you can work with them, they were pretty helpful in that. I like the cover of my first book. But that was kind of all pieces and parts and every time that something came up, I was having to go back and say what do you mean, and how does this happen? It was a really slow process. The second time I did it was again super frustrating and this time it was just I mean more than that I was so angry most of the time I spent two years of my life being furious at this publisher, who I found through winning a lottery at my writing group. I won her editing package and I didn't know until the week before the book was published that she is dyslexic. That's fine and I appreciate, and I value that she could push through that and become what she was, but boy there was certainly huge holes in her ability because of that. She was not only dyslexic she was also ADD, so it was just an endless battle that process and took longer than I wanted it to and when she "edited" I found so many errors that I had to go back and fix and that was just endless. The third book with David was way smoother I mean if he needed something from me he'd email me and if I needed something from him, and he was pretty responsive although guys in my experience tend to say I'll get right back to you, and they mean sometime in this lifetime, when I'm really thinking maybe sometime this week, so there was that. But no, he did a very professional job, he found the cover designer and we all worked together, my idea and his idea, He was very on board. So, hybrid publishing seems to be heading towards a more real publishing. I heard that it is getting more and more difficult because there are fewer publishers.

5. Have you considered or been approached about having one of your manuscripts/written works turned into other forms of media? Such as an audio book or movie?

Nope. Nope, never. Never had that opportunity. If it happened, I would be so shocked I would fall over and they would have to resuscitate me. Someone once pitched me the idea of an audio book and we talked about who would read it but no.

6. What are some things about self-publishing that you wish you knew before actually going into it? Were there any problems that you had initially that you would hope people avoid?

Well I didn't know how much it would cost. That was a thing. You know you're basically paying for everything. Somebody once said to me, "Well you just write because you like to, just for self-fulfillment." And I'm like "Yea, but I wouldn't mind getting actually paid for it, thank you very much." Self-fulfillment can be very nice but you don't have to pay for it, so I wish I had known that and I also wish I had known just how crucial it is to have some good marketing skills because if you don't have any marketing skills then the books doesn't get out there, and that is where I fall. Whenever I have had any success it is because somebody has pushed me to go out and do a signing, to go out and do a book talk, I do a lot of those I like to do that. And you sell a few but you don't sell the massive ones. I used to walk through Barnes and Nobel and look at all those books and think it would be so great if I could do that. Marketing that is absolutely where I fall on my face and if I had known how crucial that was, I probably would have investigated a little more about how to do it. Instead of just thinking well it will get out there. I don't know how I thought that was going to happen cause it sure doesn't. But the biggest thing for me as a publisher was ya know the financial stuff gets to be hairy and I don't like it. My husband was supposed to be my CFO, yea sure, right, not so much. I kind of had to fight my way through that my son has helped some. That business end and the marketing end, I'm just a creative person who doesn't want to do the business end and that's where I'm going to be a loser every time. I have a friend who I've met at a writers conference and she has self-published and formed her own publishing company, a very successful one, and she publishes other people's books and she was an attorney to begin with, so she obviously has some skill that I didn't have, and also she is a little more motivated to get out there than I am. It can be done, and I know a lot of self-publishers who have been very successful, and I also know some who have only had moderate success.

7. What kind of experience have you had with licensing your own work, was it hard or easy? Do you have to pay attention to information that you use in your works that might be under different rights?

One thing I know for sure is that you cannot use the lyrics of a song without getting permission. You can use the title of anything, but you can't use lyrics. In my third book it's about a girl named Maggie and her college boyfriend who always call her Maggie Mae from the Rob Stewart song and I started trying to use lyrics and my publisher at the time said, well we can go and get permission for this or you can just change the lyrics, which is what I did so I wouldn't have to go through that. They wouldn't have cared, really, they would have given me permission to use them, but I just didn't feel like jumping through those hoops. The other debate, I go to jazzercise, I'm sure Kathy can tell you, I'm an addict, every book has jazzercise mentioned in it. My question has been, and I've asked it to numerous people at writer's conferences, how do I do this? Can I use jazzercise in a book without getting their permission to do so, particularly in the last book I'm writing there are some people known as jazzercises that aren't that great? I've been told it's like Kleenexes or puffs they can't stop you. If I had a Jazzerciser that was constantly saving people they would probably look the other way, but if I have a jazzercise instructor who is a murderer, they might not like that, and they could conceivably come after me.

I was told to that, because I'm debating calling it Fort Meyers, where I live, or Fort Miller because it gives me more leeway and they said basically if a place is big enough you could make up a restaurant, and I've made up places in key west. Somebody else suggested to me that if you use real places in a book that people who are familiar with real places would want to buy your book and the real place might carry your book because they saw that. So I went where I normally go to get coffee, and the jazzerciser's were meeting at the coffee place, and so I asked the owner if I could use the name of his place in my book and he thought about it for about a half a second and said sure why not. Some people want to be in books and have their name mentioned and some people don't.

8. What aspect of your writing do you enjoy the most? What do your readers seem to enjoy the most, if you know that is?

Well, they always say to me after they've read a book well, I really could hear your voice, so obviously I use my own voice. I tried to write as a 14-year-old diabetic girl and my granddaughter who at the time was a 14-year-old diabetic girl said Nana you sound like you trying to sound 14. The last book in particular people really liked because it was a little different, but I try to be entertaining I don't ever try to be serious and heavy, I'm not an Oprah. I like to say that I'm the cupcake. Oprah gives you meat and potatoes, but I give you the cupcakes. When people appreciate that, there is nothing more satisfying than someone coming up and saying, just out of the blue, I just read so and so, I loved it, it was the best book I've read. One of the best compliments I thought was when somebody read the book and she wrote on like Goodreads or something that she was really sorry when the book ended. It's always nice when people like you, I just want people to be entertained. I'm not going to enlighten you or give you a whole lot of information I tend to be really random about my information and I don't necessarily fact check the way I ought to so I've said, It's my world if you don't like it, don't come in. That's a little cavalier maybe but still.

The best part of writing for me is that when I'm not writing I'm doing all kinds of other stuff but my mind isn't really engaged and now I'm writing way into this fourth book I mean I've almost driven by places I was going because I have writing in my head every minute. I'm always planning the next scene the next thing I'm going to do. For me it's not hard to get an idea, I can get the idea I just don't know what to do with it once I have it.

There are two kinds of writers, there are the plotters and they start out with an outline and they know exactly what they are going to do, and they are just going down the pipe towards it. The others are called pantsers because we write from the seat of our pants. A friend of mine said I write in free fall meaning that I start with an idea and I honestly don't know where I'm going with it. The book that I'm writing now people keep saying are you almost finished and I'm like well I just don't know how to end it, I don't know who did it, and I don't know why and I'm just writing and writing.

9. What would you say is your mission behind both your writing and your choices in publishing?

I think that I like to make people smile, I like to make people laugh if possible, smile and just make them feel good. Again, I'm not on a mission to improve the world but if I can make somebody have a few hours that they are happy and reading something and enjoying it that would be as about as close to a mission as I would get. I don't have a big desire, well of course I would like to be rich and famous wouldn't everybody, but that's not my goal. My goal is just to get the thing completed and have people read it and enjoy it.

10. A lot of publishers have some sort of identifier or calling card, so I would like to know about why the flip-flops?

The guy who did my initial website, and really it has not been upgraded and I really probably need to do that. His name is Grant Black and he lives in Florida and so my first book was about 5 women from northeast Ohio who go on a cruise in the keys and the captain of the ship is either missing or dead and of course like anybody else in the real world they decide to solve the crime instead of calling the cops because that's how that works. So that combination of Grant living here and that story taking place in Florida I think just led to the flip flop thing and if you were in my house right now you would see a lot of flip flops around because I was addicted to them for a while in my decorating. One of my little nieces came through and she said, they call me Clementine, she said Clementine you don't need any more flip flops you have enough flip flops in your house. I think it was something that just sort of represented me at the time, I don't think it does now necessarily and like I said I haven't changed that website, but I like it. I like the graphics on it, it's not very functional but hey.

One of the reasons I went with self or independent publishing as it's called today was time. I'd spent years writing and I didn't want to spend years more first getting an agent and then waiting to see if any publisher would be interested. And at the time I thought it would be easier. About that I was wrong.

Vita

The author was born in Harahan, Louisiana. She obtained her Bachelor's of Science from the University of New Orleans in 2015. She then joined the University of New Orleans English graduate program to pursue a Masters in professional writing.