

The Life and Times of a Self-Published Author

The Launch of a New Book

It is always an exciting time when something you have put your heart and soul into is ready to be put out in front of the world. A mixture of fear and exhilaration makes those days a roller coaster of emotions. The doubts are obvious: is the storyline good enough; did I catch all the rough grammar and punctuation mistakes; is the marketing plan going to work; will anybody actually read the book? The flip side is the strong sense of accomplishment after months of research and writing.

All of this explodes forth after being muted during the mundane parts of publishing. The book needs to be properly formatted. The book cover needs to be designed to grab people's attention on-line or on a bookstore shelf. The uploading of files for ebook and print-on-demand needs to be done correctly. The writing of the blurb for the book needs to entice readers to pick it up. By the time that is all done, much time has passed since the last words in your book were written. The doubts can still be strong, but the excitement may be harder to get back.

I have found that somewhere in all the preparation for launching a book, I need to take a day or two away from it all. A day where I can just veg, maybe watch a movie, or go for a walk in nature with my camera and my dog, Piper. Maybe work on that fence in my backyard that I've been avoiding while trying to get my book completed. The idea is to walk away from being an author for a while. Shift your thinking into some other activity so when you come back to writing, you have new ideas and plot lines to work with.

Now, I have a rather large imagination and I have story lines for at least ten to twelve Rainey Chronicles stories, not to mention a few others as well. They exist in my mind as scenes, like in a movie. When I sit down to actually write a book, I take those scenes and see what I can do to tie them together into a compelling story. The scenes then tend to get modified. Some get

trashed altogether because they do not fit a main plot thread weaving through the story. In some cases, they are ditched because the story has become too long and the scene doesn't really help the plot much. I do tend to repeat myself a lot, so the first rewrite is to go through and see what I didn't need to repeat. As an example, *The Locket* was originally 200,000 words. After the rewrite, it came down to its 124,000 word size. Still bigger than the average novel, but not *War & Peace* anymore either.

I get my first comfortable break from writing just after the book is sent off to the editor. Once *The Great Celt* was sent off to John back in August, I binge-watched some Marvel shows on Netflix for a week. Then it was back to setting up marketing, getting the book cover done, etc. The book came back and I dove into rewrites. I even started book 3 of the *Rainey Chronicles* and the closing section of book 9 for a science fiction contest (yes, the *Chronicles* will go into the future as well). Probably won't write the rest of book 9 for a few years

There is a lot of work that traditionally published authors have publishers to take care of. In the self-published world, that all falls to the author. Of course, if I had tried to go the traditional route, I'd still be trying to get *The Locket* published.