

EPISODE 58: FROM FLYING JETS TO FLYING HIGH – WITH INDIE AUTHOR SUSAN GRANT

James: Hello, this is James.

Just before we get going with the podcast, one more chance to remind you that we are on the last few days of enrollment for Mark Dawson's, Advertising for Authors course. It only opened once in 2016, we may get to it again this year but possibly 2018.

So, if you think it's going to be the right course for you, you've got a few days left. We're probably going to close it the middle of next week. So the fourth or fifth of April around there.

Is it the right course for you? Well, it's an advanced course, no question about that. It's for authors who want to get sign ups on to their mailing list and sales of their books driven by social media advertising.

It'll help you get other things in place but you probably need to have some inventory. And by that, I mean two or three books at this stage or at least in the process of getting those. Preferably getting towards a box set or non-fiction works in a slightly different way. We have a growing band of non-fiction authors who are using the course.

If you are in doubt, do take advantage of the refund. If you want to you can just sign up for a \$75.00 a month. Pay the first \$75.00 have a look at the full course and its materials and then, if it's not for you, you think it's too advanced or whatever the reason, you don't have to give us a reason, you can get your money back.

If it is for you, it may change everything for you. Now, I gave you a few testimonials in the last podcast. I'm just going to give you one in this one,

because it is a woman called, Heather, who came to see us in London. She actually lives in Portugal and spends her time between Africa and Portugal. It's not her books that she's using the course for, it's actually her father's. It's a very touching situation and Heather was very kind enough to tell us what the course had done for her.

Heather: My name is Heather Stretch and I represent my father, Peter, and he is an African, English novelist. He has probably been writing books since he was in his early twenties. He is now nearly 80.

For all his life he has been trying to get his books published. Through the encouragement of the course and getting the ideas out of the course, it just all came together, that's been the game changer.

It's totally changed the sales. Since late last year the sales have just been increasing and increasing. This has totally been our best year in sales. I just wish to God my father was in this room, he would be absolutely indebted. Mark has changed the whole thing for us and it's been amazing, this course. I just can't recommend it enough. If anybody is a bit hesitant about wanting to do it, just don't hesitate, you've got to do it.

James: We loved meeting Heather and hearing her story. I hope you enjoyed hearing that as well.

Okay, look, I need to give you the URL which I didn't give you before which is selfpublishingformula.com/ADS17. So if you are interested in the course you can pop along there and have a look at it.

In the meantime a great episode of the podcast coming up, and one where I get a bit hot under the collar.

Speaker 4: Two writers one just starting out, the other a best seller. Join James Blatch and Mark Dawson and their amazing guests as they discuss how you can make a living telling stories. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James: Hello.

Yes, here we are Mark Dawson and James Blatch from the Self Publishing Formula podcast.

Thank you so much indeed for joining us. I hope you find our podcast useful. A useful hour spent during your week as Indie authors to work out how to do things, like market and sell your books. All the crucial stuff, that's what we do.

We've had a good week and we are going to have a really good interview. I am personally, very, very excited about today's interview.

Mark Dawson: You've combed your hair specially.

James: I did. I brushed my hair for this because Susan Grant is a bit of a hero of mine. She is absolutely, awesome person. She writes really interesting, cross-genre books.

She's a remarkable woman, she would have been a fighter pilot in the United State Air Force, but they didn't allow women to fly on the front lines. She flew fighter jets, the F-5s or the equivalent T-38s, I think they were, if you know your jets like the F-5s.

Mark Dawson: (Snoring).

James: Don't do that.

She flew those and trained the young jocks, who then went off to the front line. In today's world, she would be allowed on the front line. Today, she is a Boeing 747 captain with United, I think. I did ask her in the interview.

She flies around the world. She's in charge of this huge airplane with the iconic jumbo jet aircraft and she writes every spare moment. She taps away on keyboards in Hong Kong hotel room on layovers.

She writes several series of books which have, if you look at some of the front covers, they have sort of fighter planes on them and a bit of space alien stuff as well and a bit of romance in there. So, really interesting.

She works very hard at what she's doing. She's had some great success and she's very tuned into the Indie world and getting into it more now, I think. And very excited about, going to the next level.

We thought she'd be a great interviewee and we weren't wrong. It's a really, really good interview. So, without further ado, let's hear from my heroine

What were you going to say?

Mark Dawson: Listen as James' is blushing like a fan boy.

James: I am a fan boy. Let's hear from Susan.

Susan: I am Susan Grant, I am a New York Times bestselling, RITA winning author. I'm a proud Indie now after being in traditional publishing for a very long time, with 21 books.

I'm starting over this year.

James: That's excellent. Now there's lots of exciting reasons why I'm thrilled to be talking to you today, not least because you used to be a fighter pilot and you are currently a Boeing 747 pilot. Is that correct?

Susan: Yes. I was actually an instructor for people, men in those days, who went on to fly fighters. When I was in the Air Force I was prevented from flying fighters. I didn't have the right body parts.

James: Yes, that's a shame that lasted so long like that.

You flew F-5s, is that right?

Susan: T-38s.

James: Oh, T-38s.

Susan: The non-combat version.

James: Ah, T-38s okay, yeah.

You know what, when somebody off the street sees a T-38 fly over ... this is what they fly right?

Susan: Yes.

James: When they see one of those flying over, it's a fighter jet as far as they're concerned.

Susan: Yes.

James: You may not have flown. Fortunately for you, you didn't get your hands on an F-15 or something. But you're a fighter pilot as far as I'm concerned because you flew a fighter jet.

Susan: And it goes supersonic and they have afterburners. We wore suits and helmets.

James: Exactly and there's a very cool pictures of you.

The F-5 was the competent aircraft in Top Gun, which people might remember, as well. It's the same sort of F rank.

That's exciting and not least for me because the regular listeners of this podcast know that I am writing a book based on the RAF in the 1960's. That's my opening book. My father, like you, was a pilot. He did have the right body parts, though, so he was allowed to fly fighters. We should say that has changed both in the States and the UK now.

Susan: I know.

James: I guess when you went for it ... you must have been just a few years after you, not long after you?

Susan: It was quite a long time. I'm trying to think, I got out in 1989.

James: Ah, okay.

Susan: And I think it changed some time in the 90's.

James: Yeah. There's still one or two places. I think submarines may still be resisting in the UK, women, but there you go.

That's exciting. So you've got this background in flying and aviation.

Now you fly the iconic 747, one of the great airliners of my lifetime.

Susan: Yeah, I know.

James: It feels like it might be in its last decade or so because airlines don't seem to be buying jumbo jets as much anymore.

What an exciting life.

Susan: It's been very exciting.

I'm one of those right brain, left brain people. A constant back and forth. I love what I do and traveling because it lets me put that into my books.

James: Yeah. Well, we will come on to your books in a moment. I should just say that if people are flying, it's Delta that I think you fly for.

Susan: United.

James: United, sorry, oh my goodness, I said one of the big competitors. You fly for United with your new business class.

Susan: Yeah, Polaris.

James: Do you fly under your author name? Is Susan Grant your name as a pilot?

Susan: Hm mmm.

James: I'm just thinking that people are going to be sitting there listening.

Susan: I have enough in my head, I'll keep one name.

James: Yeah.

Susan: Everyone at work is really supportive. I started writing in 1998 with the Gold Publication. My first books came out in 2000 so it happened quickly. The fact that I was a pilot and writing about pilots was the angle that got me looked at, bought and published.

James: Yeah. Well you should use everything you've got, right to get yourself out?

Susan: I know, you do.

James: Yeah.

Susan: It was a different world back then with publishing though, than it is now.

James: Yeah you've certainly lived through that and we will talk about that transition as well in a moment.

Let's talk about the books so people understand what you write.

Your books from the outside they look quite a curious mix. You know, people often say to us, "Are my books not a particular genre, that's why I'm having trouble selling?" Then I look at your books which do cross a couple of genres really and some of them have a strong fantasy elements to them. I found all of them, I think have strong fantasy elements to them, but then there's also fighter jets which we'd recognize from the real world on the front cover and there's usually a pretty sexy looking man looking out from your book covers.

Just explain in your words what the genre is.

Susan: I like to explain it this way.

If Dad was a science fiction book and Mom was a romance book and they had a kid, that's what I write. I write hybrids, where I'm telling a fully real life science fiction story but over the course of the story two people meet, fall in love and that we have a romance that develops and has a positive, happy ending. There's a definite balance.

You will please some science fiction writers sometimes more maybe the romance readers more, but I feel like it is a balancing act.

I love Star Wars, science fiction that has some element of romance in it. So that's what I write, that's what I will read. Not that I will always write this and I

do write other things, but its where I got my start and what my readers want to read from me.

James: You were obviously a bit of a leader as a woman pilot, in the early days. Although as we just discussed, just missed that moment when they were fully accepted into flying.

Do your women take a lead role in your books or is it the man who is going to be flying the jets? And doing the saving?

Susan: Both my male and female characters will fly. But, I definitely write strong women. The characters will be who the characters are. My women just happen to end up being strong, not always confident but they might find their confidence. That's part of their character arcs.

James: You started back in 1998, I guess when you came out of the Air Force.

Were you transitioning to commercial pilot flying then?

Susan: It was actually ten years into being a commercial pilot. I had young kids and I was just about a year into flying the 747. I had flown the 737, the smaller airliners for going on ten years at that point.

I had my kids at the doctors, so they had their checkups and I spoke to another mom and she had written a book. I said, "Wow, she wrote a book." I never met or spoke to anyone who had written a book. I had always loved creative writing and making up stories. I said, "If she can write a book, I can write a book." That's how everything started.

I miss that first book, I wrote a 600 page historical epic that could never probably sell. I never tried to sell it. Just the joy of waking up and knowing no rules and just writing and having the pages just flow. That was way

before my internal editor kicked in or before I thought about what readers might want to read. I wrote that book for me.

Then the next book I wrote was to try to get a book published.

James: You thought a little bit more commercially about the second book.

Was your second book this hybrid science fiction romance?

Susan: It was a time travel romance. I went to a writer's conference in around 1998. We got to listen to some editors and at that time they said, time travel romance is the hottest new thing. So, I said, "I'll write one of those".

I got on the airplane to fly home from the conference and I had a napkin and I started writing out the idea for this story. It's about a navy fighter pilot who has to eject during a lightning storm and ends up in 1821 and is hauled aboard a pirate ship.

James: Fantastic, what a great book.

Susan: It was so much fun to write but the culture clash, which is really what my science fiction romance books are all about. I love the culture clash, royals versus commoners, military versus non, being fish out of water, that's what I love to write.

James: Sounds great.

You're an early success then, so you got a deal within a couple of years. Tell me what that was like and how that worked out for you.

Susan: I got my agent from that first writer's conference. In those days, I don't know if it still applies, attending writer's conferences was the way to get past the gate-keepers. We all know about that recent blog and they

talked about having the publishers, the gate-keepers. In those days they really were and you needed an agent.

The story goes, the agent was in bed going through her slush pile next to her husband. She's a well-known agent. Her husband just picked one up, which were my first three chapters that I submitted, which was the time travel which begins in the cockpit of an F-18. He said, "Honey, you need to read this. This is really interesting". That's how I ended up getting her as agent.

I got the notice of an editor through the contest circuit. She had put the manuscripts in with editors but I started entering as many contests as I could. The prize was to get your manuscript in front of an editor. I started winning and I got my manuscripts in front of editors. It was a mini bidding war for my books between two publishers. I went with one of them and stayed with them until they started to go into bankruptcy.

James: Right.

Susan: That was Dorchester and then I went to Harlequin.

James: Okay.

Susan: That's where I finished up.

James: I don't want to pry too much on the financial side, but we are all writers and this is a business side of this as well. Was this heading towards potentially an independent career for you? I mean, you loved your job. I'm sure you loved your job flying.

You probably weren't thinking about finishing that but in terms of the professional side was this turning into a professional career or was it just pin money for you?

Susan: It was decent money but not enough to live on. Not where I wanted, it was not able to replace my flying income. It allowed me to take my kids traveling. I used some of it. I put some of it in savings. I was able to take some out and take them traveling, which really ended up being the most wonderful thing with their upbringing. We went to 15 countries and nothing luxurious, it was bare bones traveling. If it wasn't for that, I probably could not have done those things for them.

To this day, I'm not in a situation yet, where I can replace my flying income or get close. I feel being Indie is my best chance. After only a year, I could say if I really could work at this and put more time into it maybe I could get there.

James: You're with Harlequin.

At what point did you have the whole Indie thing come on to the horizon for you?

Susan: It was 2011 my last book with them came out. I was also with Berkeley with a series of anthologies, paranormal anthologies and I still technically am with both of those publishers, as they continue to publish those books.

I was not pleased with how things were going. I had lost my editor and when you're orphaned with a traditional publisher it's not good. You lose your advocate, the person who liked your books, she was gone.

They were starting to have some financial issues so, there were a series of assistant editors and I didn't feel they really understood my books or were not that enthusiastic about my books. That was sad to leave that publisher advocate.

The packaging, we would work so hard on a story ...

I don't know of many Indie's who dream of being with traditional publishers realize that once you take your story that you've worked so hard on and you then hand it in, you then lose control of it, you have no say in the packaging.

You could get a cover that is awful and maybe it doesn't match your story. Once in my case I got a recycled cover they just changed the title and put my name on it. It didn't match the story at all. I felt frustrated.

I also would come up with some edgy ideas that the committee didn't believe would appeal to a lot of readers. I wanted a space pirate female who had an eye patch and she became addicted to painkillers and how to work through that in the story. I loved that edgy character but I had to get rid of the eye patch and get rid of the addiction. The story was never the same to me after that.

I finished up my contract with them in 2011 and I really didn't know. I had no more desire to be in that world. I felt like it was trading my creativity. The Indie was just starting to get going, but I wasn't aware of it.

I just went under and became a reader again and I went back to flying. In the time, the five years, I was gone, everything changed. It was like being Rip Van Winkle, I woke up and you could be an Indie author.

That was a funny story how I found out. I was in a taxicab in Tokyo, heading from the airport on a layover with the other pilots. It's free WiFi, so I got on my laptop. A woman that I used to know could never get her books bought, it was very frustrating for her, she was a good writer. I saw she was in a box set. I said, "Wow, how did she get to do that". I looked her up, I found an article in a newspaper that she was now a multi-million dollar selling author, independent. I never knew you could be an Indie, so, I said, "I'm going to be an Indie".

James: That was that.

Susan: That's how I started. I was one year into now, I'm just coming up on one year into it. It's like if you go into a health club and you see a treadmill and someone has like ramped it up to full speed and you jump on it and you get thrown off, that's how I've been feeling.

I keep getting on, sometimes I can hold on and stay on there and sometimes I can't. It's all the exhilarating freedom you could ever dream of as a creative person. It's just so much work, because what the publisher used to do or what you would want them to do, you have to do all of now.

James: Yeah.

Susan: So that's the hardest part for me, the balance. Plus I work full time and I have two millennials, they take work.

James: So you must be a workaholic to an extent. I hope you're nice and refreshed when you're flying.

You must look after your sleep, right?

Susan: I do. But for work I have to stop things sometimes or with my assistant say, "I really need to stop, it's a certain time, I need to go to bed and get rest". If I'm on a layover I have to watch my rest.

I can focus a lot, I can focus for long periods, so that's good.

James: A year or so ago, when you started getting into Indie:

What did you read? Who did you listen to? How did you make your decisions? And, what have you done?

Susan: Last fall, I did a smart move. I started talking to people who are doing Indies. Some people who weren't fans of mine as unpublished writers were now Indie. They were really helpful. So speaking to other authors, I would say was my number one resource with information. I decided to continue the series that I had gotten rights back for. I didn't mention it but, I thought it was a horrible thing when my first publisher, Dorchester, went out of business. I hadn't been paid for those books in years and that was another de-motivating factor. The slow painful process of bankruptcy. They went out of business and the rights reverted from nine, my nine original titles.

I didn't do anything with them for a couple of years. I didn't know what to do, then I started finding out how to get covers. They weren't E-books at all so I haven't put them through the process where they're scanned and made into E-books. I had to start from scratch.

I decided to write my first Indie as a follow on to those books. Yet, also a spin-off. It's number one in it's own series but it's number four in my long running series.

James: You have those nine original titles to publish now as an independent author.

Susan: I do. This was the year I wrote one Indie novel, I had one Indie novella but the rest of my time has been spent getting those books covers, blurbs that sell and work, which is not easy, as you know.

Getting the books revised, some of the early ones they were still using phones with chords and answering machines that sat on your kitchen counter, there was no social media, cameras still had film, there were old sayings that I had to edit out.

I must have done the equivalent of seven novels this year. Putting so much blood and sweat into getting these books better. I'm also a better writer

now than I was, all those 20 years ago. Most of them are back up. Contact is still up that was my Rita win book. It's very out of date and I need to fix it. The story is still strong but it is out of date. I've got two more, but I'm so tired of revising old things. I just want to write. I'm getting ready to write new stuff now. I'm very excited.

If I ever get done with all the business aspect of being an Indie.

James: Yeah, you never quite get done.

Susan: Quite a balancing act.

James: You never quite get done with it.

Susan: I'm never going to be done with it.

James: Try to get a bit of a handle on it.

Are you list building? Are you building your own mailing list now?

Susan: Yes, with Mark Dawson and others, I have been trying to learn as much as I can about that. I've got a core list of only about 600 subscribers but they're purely organic. They are on that list because they are fans of mine and they want to hear what I have going.

I've done some other contests and so I think total, I've got about, going on 3,000 if you counted everything. Some of the other people might only be interested in freebies or sales.

The mailing list is the thing, I really need to build with organic subscribers. James Yeah and you're dipping into our community in one or two others. Have you done any of our courses on self-publishing?

Susan: I want to. I went to LBF and heard Mark there. I want to do all these things. I'm trying to figure out time management so I can do them all. I'm trying to learn, I do have an author who is a genius with Facebook ads and I didn't have any up until this past month.

I would boost posts but I didn't know how to do the Facebook ads. I listened to Mark, it sounded like it was another language. Despite being a jumbo jet pilot, I am not great with numbers. I just couldn't get it, but now this author, because Indie authors are really great with each other, she said, "I'll help you".

I've seen the results. It's going toward the end of the second month now. We got my "Perma Free" being advertised now in the Facebook ad. I'm seeing a great ranking with it and I'm starting to see sales through to the other books. It's convinced me that advertising works. I just didn't know where to start.

James: You've got a great head start, really, on most of us, to have those nine titles. I know, you've talked about the pain of having to go through and update them, but really, that's a lot less pain than writing nine new novels from scratch.

Susan: Oh, I know, I'm very lucky.

James: That back catalog that can set yourself up, rather than like the rest of us, thinking that by the end of next year I might have three books if I work really hard.

You're ready to go on that front. It is understanding the world you are moving into which is a culture change, that's for sure.

Susan: I think that it is a long distance run. It's not a sprint and I try to tell myself, don't try and pop in and have everything established like many authors who have been doing this for a number of years have.

I look at what seems to work and I try to emulate what works. Life can be a whack ball game where something crops up and you try to beat it down. I'm trying to be more organized. I am very grateful for the back list and even people who are listening to this and they are just starting out, one book, you will eventually have your back list. You just have to be patient with yourself.

James: When do you write, Susan?

Susan: I write whenever I can. When I'm home, I try to do it in the morning and when I'm alert and go through daytime work hours.

When I'm on layover, I'm many times 12 hours out of sync with my home time. So, with trying to make sure I get my rest, I'll write on my layovers in the hotel. It's not really a great routine, because I don't have a set Monday through Friday routine. I write whenever I can and many times I write using the note app on my I-phone with my thumbs.

James: Really.

Susan: So if I'm on the checkout line at the supermarket or waiting somewhere, I'll just start writing.

I do that and transfer it into Microsoft Word. I also have just gotten involved with Dragon speak and there's a wonderful Facebook group, Dragon Writers for Authors.

I commute, sometimes it's four hours when I have to drive to the airport in rush hour. I hope I can start dictating while I'm driving.

James: I'm going to have a go at that, so let's keep in touch and see how we get on with that.

Susan: I tried it for the first time, on my last drive. It felt weird, but I dictated for 12 minutes. I came home and put it into the computer, almost 1,300 words. Sometimes that takes me hours. I was very impressed. So production could really go up.

James: That's a really encouraging start. I know one of our listeners, Claire Sager has been talking in the groups about having an immediate success when she switched to Dragon. She's pressing on with it. I'm interested in doing it as well.

Anything that helps the productivity, right, has got to be good.

Susan: That and there seems like there would be a huge boost. There are people doing six thousand words in a day.

James: Yeah.

Susan: In just a few hours, wouldn't that be great.

James: How often do you fly? Long haul, I imagine you must get some days in between your trips.

Susan: I am lucky that I am senior in the airline world. It's based on your date of hire. In my fleet, the 747, in my seat, I'm a First Officer. I'm fairly senior, so I can have more of a choice in my schedule. I've been choosing to work Wednesday through Friday every week. In a weekly schedule, I prefer that.

On Wednesday morning I fly off to, usually it's Korea, sometimes Japan. I like the three day trips not the four day trips. And then I'm home on Friday.

James: Okay, so that's manageable.

Susan: I like it. It's very manageable

James: Well I have this image of you in a hotel in Tokyo at 2 a.m., in the morning, writing your book, which I guess is exactly what happens.

Susan: Exactly, yes.

James: There's something, we've all gotten used to the world shrinking. Getting on a metal tube and get off in Japan or something. It's still remarkable that that happens and there's still something about walking around, particularly in a very different place like Seoul or Tokyo.

Susan: Yeah.

James: That has got to feed into your kind of fantasy lifestyle, in a way, what you're writing in your books is rather glamorous, right?

It wasn't that long ago it was the height of glamor and now we all do it a bit and so it's not as glamorous, as it used to be, but it's still glamorous.

Susan: Well, it helps me when I write about pilots in space and flying spaceships. I bring my flying into it, so I love being able to bring realism. Also, when you're on another planet and you're trying to find something to eat, what might you eat? It helps me imagine that because I feel like I'm on another planet sometimes when I walk around some of these countries and the markets, that all feeds into it.

James: Things that are alive.

Susan: Yeah. Things that are alive. I will eat just about everything. I draw the line at insects.

James: Okay.

Susan: And organs that I can't identify.

James: Yeah.

Susan: I went to a market in Taipei and I wasn't happy seeing turtles and cute animals.

But just about everything else.

James: That sounds like a very sensible set of rules, Susan. I guess you need to have some sense of adventure for where you're going.

The authors have come on, I can't read everybody's book. We do lots of author interviews. I'm going to pick a couple of yours because I'm really fascinated to see how they work out, as much as anything, learning from you because you've been a writing for a long time and I'm starting out.

We're in a similar area. Mine is not fantasy, it's real world but it's still, I want to get as much flying in as possible because it's something the Japanese call fan service. Have you had fan service? It's where they will put something in there that's usually a bit salacious, so it might be some sauciness to the cartoon and there's a scene in there that is there just for what they call fan service.

For me when the guy goes off, because he's angry and he's taken a hunt off the line just to do as a check flight and he's flying off because you get lost in that flight a little bit because that's what people want. They want some of the detail of what it's like to be a fighter pilot because they're not going to be doing that themselves.

I am very curious to read your books and get a sense of the atmosphere in the cockpit and the kind of culture of that whether it's a spaceship or an F-18 or whatever. I'm curious to hear from the master.

Susan: Thanks. I re-did my 2176 books and they are much more action oriented. They have a lot more male readers for those. Those are about two

fighter pilots that end up being put into a time machine by the North Korean's and wake up 160 years in the future.

James: Cool.

Susan: I do have male readers for my books. I know my audience is mostly female, so I'm writing for them. I may not always. I'm leaving it open now that I have the freedom to write what I want.

I think how I can best serve other writers for the first starting, is by motivating them to not to give up. I still feel very new, I may have 21 books with traditional publishers and two Indies but, I feel very new right now, very humbled by publishing right now.

James: Yeah, that's modest of you. It's probably going to serve you well to have that attitude rather than the person who swaggers in thinking Indie is some kind of poor relation of the publishing industry. It's actually a tough nut to crack.

Susan: I've been in both.

James: Yeah, you probably have got a new appreciation for some of the stuff that was going on in the background for you.

Susan: I think that it was actually good when I read a blog where they mentioned the publishers were the gatekeepers back then. I'm glad now that you can go that route if you want to but, you no longer have to. It also doesn't mean that I will never write something for a traditional publisher. Indie is so exhilarating. It's tough to get noticed, it's tough to learn everything you need to do.

Look at what you and Mark are doing and offering this and all the information on the website. When I opened it up, I said, "It's a gold mine of information here", of course more mental overload, because I have to learn.

With the Indie world your other authors are going to be your best friends and the most help. In the traditional publishing world, I found sometimes it was like being in the dog pack. There was never quite enough food always just enough to survive but not quite enough to make you feel satiated. They would throw out a bone to us and I felt like we were all scrabbling for a piece of that bone. There is nothing like that atmosphere in the Indie world. If the water rises all of our ships rise. That is such a wonderful thing, I'm very excited to be a part of it.

James: I think that's what we all love about this world without question. It's wonderful to be a part of that community and supportive of each other's successes and helping.

Susan: Very much so.

James: Yeah, certainly where we're coming from and we enjoy that. Susan, time has rattled past.

I have to start one of the cameras again because it keeps stopping on me. We're coming up to 35 minutes which is probably a little bit over where we normally go with interviews. For me its been brilliant talking to you. I'm really, really interested in your journey. I know you're feeling overloaded, it's like your first couple of days in flight school, right? Overwhelming. A year later you look back and you think ...

Susan: Exactly, it's a lot like that.

James: Yeah, so in a year's time you will have settled down a little bit and if you would do us the honor of coming on in a year's time. I'd love to see how you've got on and how you got things set up and how you're finding it.
Susan: I would be honored and I would love to do that then. You promised airplane questions, ask them anytime.

James: Yeah, yeah. I'm going to send you some airplane questions just probably for my own interest. Also, I'm going to try and take a United flight and I'm looking for First Officer, Susan Grant on the captain's seat and on the P.A.

Susan, thank you so much for joining us. Good luck with your career. We will speak to you again.

Susan: Good luck with yours.

James: Thank you.

What's not to love about Susan Grant?

Mark Dawson: So James has just returned from the belfry.

James: Oh, please.

Mark Dawson: Ha, ha.

James: I'm going to put them on our YouTube version of the podcast. There's some very cool pictures of Susan in aviation days.

I thought she was a lovely person to speak to, really interesting. Bottom line is she sits down and she writes, wherever she is. Those of us that try to make excuses when we've got a nice office at home and all the time in the world. There she is flying around the world and still finding time to knock out these books.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, there's always time. I did it while commuting on the train in 2014. This is a bit more glamorous than commuting from Salisbury to Waterloo everyday. Flying and having layovers in exotic locations, puts me to shame. It's impressive, she's done an amazing job. Great to see her

really engaging in the Indie way coming to the dark side after traditionally publishing and getting into the swing of things.

Really good.

James: Yeah well, she's a great example of how the traditional publishing model really doesn't work for many authors and now Indie is an empowering and opening up experience for them.

It might well be, that she eluded to in the next few years, she might become full time as an author. If she finally puts her wings down but what a great life she's had and is having.

Susan and I really hit it off.

Mark Dawson: Get a room.

James: Yeah, get a plane. Good.

Now we mention it every week that we have an E-book which we have put together, which contains everything that we've done in our first 50 plus episodes of the podcasts. There's lots and lots of useful stuff in there. Lots of links, stuff you may have missed and we know you can't necessarily mark out the time to listen back to all the podcasts, what you can do is search an E-book to find the subject areas that you are interested in. You can download that absolutely free at selfpublishingformula.com/vault.

Mark Dawson: Very good.

James: The vault of gold. The vault of goodness. The vault of value.

Mark Dawson: The vault of genius.

James: Vault of genius. How about the value vault?

Mark Dawson: The John Dyer Memorial Vault.

James: Yes, has he actually passed away. He's on the floor down there, isn't he. If you're watching YouTube you might be able to see him on the GoPro.
John: Is it any wonder?!

James: Is it any wonder? He's winding us up. You don't get to wind us up. Great, we've got some super interviews coming up in the future. When we ask people what it is they want to hear, they often say they want to hear from authors. I think we all like to hear from other authors, how they do things, what makes them work, what works for them. We've had a couple of really good author interviews recently and we've got more to come. Susan Grant, H.M. Ward a couple of weeks ago. So we will continue to do them. If you have a particular author who you would like to hear, we can do that interview for you. Just suggest them and we will try and dig them out. I know you suggested J.K. Rowling and I am trying with J.K. Rowling, but I haven't got a reply yet.

Mark Dawson: You need a stunt.

James: Right.

Mark Dawson: We have to think about this. I'm sure there's some kind of media stunt that we can put up to get her attention.

James: Yeah. I don't think she's that sort of person.

Mark Dawson: We need to deploy the Dyer.

James: Why don't we pretend we don't know who Robert Galbraith and just ask if we can do a Robert Galbraith interview.

Mark Dawson: I like it, that's a good one.

James: So we want to do an interview with Robert Galbraith and J.K. Rowling because we feel their writing styles are similar.

Mark Dawson: I like that.

James: See if she falls for that.

Good. Okay, thank you very much indeed for listening.

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