

PODCAST 16: FROM POLICE OFFICER TO GAZILLION SELLING AUTHOR – WITH CLARE MACKINTOSH

James: This broadcast is brought to you by Mark Dawson's [Facebook Ads for Authors course. It's open for enrollment right now.](#) This online instructional video tutorial course is getting results and changing authors lives.

Speaker 2: Since starting my income has tripled.

Speaker 3: It just worked wonders.

Speaker 4: Immediately. I think within the first day my sales just started jumping, and jumping, and jumping.

Speaker 5: In December I think I made eleven hundred dollars profit, but this month I'm probably going to make eight thousand, maybe seventy-five hundred. It's changed my life.

Speaker 6: It's completely changed my life.

Speaker 7: There's plenty out there that says it can't be done. You're screwed, you'll never make a dime, you'll never sell your book, just all of that out there. It was great to find a positive voice with a strategic and very detailed, tactical plan to get that done.

Speaker 8: Everything that I looked at was garbage until I saw Mark's course.

James: Go to selfpublishingformula.com/Facebook for more info and to enroll. Enrollment will close on the thirteenth of June, 2016. Hello and welcome to podcast number sixteen from The Self Publishing Formula.

Speaker 9: Two writers, one just starting, 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: Yes, hello. Welcome to The Self Publishing Formula podcast with James Blatch and Mark Dawson. Good morning Mark, how are you are?

Mark: Good afternoon James. How are you?

James: Good afternoon. I have no idea. We've had such a busy week. I have no idea what time of day it is.

Mark: I don't know where I am. I think I'm in Salisbury but I wouldn't lay money on it.

James: It's been great. We've had a very, very busy few days. The course is open and taking on students at a great rate. We've had hundreds of students sign up for the premium course. We've been doing webinars, and that's been very exciting hasn't it Mark?

Mark: Yeah, it's always quite nervous when you open the course for the next time. You don't know quite what response you're going to get, but we've really been taken aback by how many people want to learn how to do this. It's been really flattering.

The Mastery Facebook group, which is where all the students hang out has been just buzzing with activity. Some really great messages going on in there, some good learning being exchanged right now, and I think students will be about ready to start testing their ads out quite soon. That's really, really exciting.

James: There was definitely lots of enthusiasm for the course launch beforehand. That's been realized now, and people who've got some books

and got some campaigning going on now, looking at doing a new, sort of refreshed approach to it. Other people were starting out, really setting themselves up for commercial success, and digging into the detail. It is a detailed course. I spent a bit of time going through it, as you know Mark. We refreshed it a bit with some new screen flows, and a little bit of new color, and rebranding.

The detail, I have to say, I'm plugging my own course because I'm part of the SPF, but the detail is absorbing. It's quite gripping watching it. That's, I think, our advantage with this course. There are a lot of courses that you can get on social media advertising. I've done a few of them, because I've done a Twitter module, YouTube ad module is on its way. They're disappointing when they get to that point where they say, "You may want to fill this in if you think that's going to be good for your audience, or you may want to do this." Whereas what you say is, "Don't do that, do this." Very specific for selling books for authors.

Mark: That's right. The clue is in the title of the course. It's Facebook Ads for Authors. It's not Facebook ads for real estate agents, or attorneys. It's for writers. That's what I am, so when I did the course I did it with clear focus on what would be useful for where I would have been two years ago. What I would have loved to have known, which would have saved me time, and effort, and money. Yeah, it's good to hear you say that. We've had lots of comments from students who feel that way too. That's always really nice to hear.

James: Good. Everyone likes our professional approach, and I have now shut my mail down so you're not going to get another beep over your talking, because we are professionals here. Okay, right...

Let's move on to our featured interview for today. Her name is Clare Mackintosh, she lives in the United Kingdom. She is a former police detective. Not the only former police detective we've spoken to on this podcast who's now turned to thriller writing. I'm getting famous at getting

book titles wrong during interviews and I think did again with her sequel, but her first book, *I Let You Go*, was her big breakthrough. It's been lauded around the world, it's been a best-seller in the United Kingdom. She's breaking it into the States at the moment. Let's listen to Clare and hear about her journey.

Clare Mackintosh, now you might remember at the London Book Fair that we bumped into a member of the SPF community called Darryl Donaghue, who is an ex-CID detective. What's CID? I suppose the FBI type equivalent in the U.K. that investigates serious crimes, and he turned his hand to writing police procedures, no surprise.

He's not the only one because one of the more famous ex-policeman now writing is Clare Mackintosh, who we're joined by today. Clare you are also CID, you also got to that point, I think, when the job became a little bit overwhelming.

I sense that there was a writer in you always struggling to get out, but you've had an absolutely phenomenal last eighteen months, haven't you?

Clare: I have. It's that terrible cliché of talking about the roller coaster journey. It makes you feel a little bit X-Factor, but it really has been like that over the last eighteen months, couple of years. It's been incredible.

James: I'll let you tell your story in a moment, but I know the bare bones of it. I know that you did some freelance articles, and magazines, and you described, I think, in an interview once was a mediocre chick lit novel. Which we'll ask you about, but didn't see the light of day I don't think.

Clare: Well it definitely won't now.

James: What a shame. I reckon you should subtitle it, *My Mediocre Chick Lit Novel*, see how it goes. You then drew on your experience. You are a policeman, you've dealt with the darker side of life. I think you've said in interviews in the past that you felt that there was something darker to be

written about, and you drew on some real life experiences. The book was called I Let You Go.

You had an agent, I think, with the chick lit novel before, so you had some connection with a traditional publishing industry at this stage?

Clare: Yep.

James: Okay, I'm telling your story here, so then you picked up an agent and they realized quite early on that this was a good book. But what I was interested in, and what I think people will be interested in now, particularly on the traditional publishing path that you've been on, is that a lot of work went into the book, in redrafting, and editing.

Twelve months worth of work before it saw the light of day then?

Clare: Oh, at least, yeah. Let me think back. I wrote I Let You Go, I wrote the first draft in 2012, I think. That's when I signed with Curtis Brown, with my literary agent. I did another, at least one, if not two rewrites with the guidance of my agent, before it went out on submission in spring 2013. We sold it in May 2013, and it came out in November 2014. We had almost eighteen months of editing with my publisher, with my editor at Little Brown. It went through, probably, eight or nine drafts of the book before it was ready.

James: I want to talk to you about that because I think people will be interested in that process, but let's just quickly say that the book was picked up by no less than Richard and Judy's Book Club. Most of our audience in America say they don't know who Richard and Judy are, but we should say that they are a married couple who, they sort of dominate day-time television in the U.K. They're actually a lovely couple, and they're brilliant broadcasters, the pair of them.

They started slightly off beat, this little book club a few years back, and it suddenly became, very quickly became a really important thing in the publishing world. I was one of those people, a reader, who picked up a Richard and Judy Book Club recommendation book, and didn't put it down. From then on knew when that sticker was on a book in a bookshop it was a really solid recommendation.

That must have been huge for you when you got that sticker.

Clare: Yeah it was. Like you say, they carry huge kudos that they're sort of like the Oprah, perhaps, here in the U.K. I aspired to be that sort of book. It didn't really occur to me that I might be one of their book club picks, but I certainly wanted to hit that sort of level. That sort of commercial recognition.

When I found out about five months before it was announced, which is quite a long time to keep something secret, it was a huge endorsement. In fact, even before then when I knew that my publishers were putting me forward for it, because they only put forward two or three titles from their huge, huge range of books to be considered for the book club, that gave me enormous confidence. Knowing that my publisher felt it was strong enough to be considered was a big compliment. It has, undoubtedly changed my life. It set my career on a path that might not have happened without their endorsement.

James: It was a very strong book. There's no doubt about that. I'm sure that helped, but by the sounds of it, you're going to be a very successful writer regardless.

I'm really interested in the drafting stage, because most of our audience is self publishers. Some have a foot in both camps. You've gone through that traditional publishing. It's actually becoming a rarer journey, the one that you've had, I suppose, as publishing changes and transforms over time.

That period then, what was that like when you had your book, and we all know we have to kill our darlings, et cetera, and go through the editing process, but that sounds quite brutal, what happened.

Clare: It was. I suppose out of those eight drafts, four of them, maybe five, were structural. No, four of them, four big structural drafts where I literally ripped the entire book apart and wrote it again. I lost subplots, I lost characters, I brought in new themes, new threats, those were really, really big, but that still leaves another four drafts where it was really about the layers.

It was about building more depth to characters, and to settings, and to themes. It was about making the twists work, and because it's a twist in *Let You Go*, which is sort of slightly unusual, more than the normal sort of who's the baddie? It relies heavily on language to a certain extent, and so a lot of the drafting process was about linguistically making sure that the book worked.

It was very satisfying because you have to be quite clever about the way you phrase things, and how you write them, but it was exhausting. And it was quite demoralizing to know that I sold this book, and I should be on cloud nine, but I didn't actually have anything to show for it. It felt very often as though I was never going to be able to produce a book that was to the right standard. I had to keep coming back to what my editor and agent had said after the very first draft. They'd both been really excited about this book, so I had to keep reminding myself that all I was doing was I wasn't taking a terrible book and trying to make it good, I was taking a good book, and trying to make it even better.

Mark: Mission accomplished as far as that was going Clare. In terms of putting it into context, you were still working for the police at that point I guess?

Clare: No. I left the police in 2011 and wrote this book in 2012. I left predominately for personal reasons in that I wasn't being the sort of mother I really wanted to be. I was very much having the career that I wanted to have, but that was at the expense of my children.

I'd been through a rather traumatic time. I'd lost one of my children to meningitis, so I really needed to reevaluate my priorities. I left to be at home with them and writing was something that you said at the beginning that you suspected I'd always been a writer, and I certainly have been, and was probably one of the few police officers that loved doing paperwork, and putting files together.

I'd never thought it could be a career choice, but everyone says, "Don't give up the day job until you're really making a living from writing." I did it the other way around. In my case it was desperation that enabled me to make a living from it. I had to make a living from writing. It was the only thing I knew how to do that wasn't policing, and it was the only thing I could do from home. Freelance writing had to pay my mortgage. It had to cover the bills. I couldn't wait for the news. I couldn't worry about writers block, I just had to pitch, pitch, pitch until I had enough work to keep a roof over my head.

Mark: As you said, the editorial process was pretty prolonged for this. That must have been reasonably frustrating because on the one hand you wanted to put out the best book that you could, on the other hand you wanted to put the book out and hopefully to get it sold.

That must have been quite a frustrating year and a half for you.

Clare: It really was. I was very conscious of the fact that I had signed this two book deal, that it wasn't a particularly huge deal, and I certainly couldn't live on it, so I was still doing a lot of journalism. Of course the longer the editing process took, the further away I was from any money coming in, from royalties, the further away I was from another deal after that, and just from building my career.

Looking back it all seems like actually, a relatively short period of time. Certainly it all worked very well. That kind of slow build, it was all necessary to build my career in the way that it has happened since then, but certainly at the time it was both frustrating and a worry. A financial worry.

Mark: As the audience members probably know this, the way the money is actually delivered in terms of self-publishing and traditional publishing is very different. Amazon and the other platforms will typically pay two months and a raise on a monthly basis. But you'll get an advance for a publishing deal, which as you say, might not be certainly, is not always enough to live on.

And then you won't see anymore money until the book is published, and then you won't see anymore money possibly until the next edition is published.

Clare: Absolutely. The first edition of *I Let You Go* came out in November 2014. The first royalty statement that had any sort of significance was October 2015.

Mark: Almost a year.

James: The book writing process, you've explained a bit. In terms of your writing ability, and a lot of us think about how to build up to plot twists and so, I'm going back a little bit here. But it's the bit that interests me, the plot twist, and how to actually take a reader on a journey where it's not very predictable even if you know everything in your mind that's going to work out.

But you're somebody who liked writing. You're somebody who followed real life obviously as a policeman, and again I'm going to guess you're somebody who's read a lot.

Did you discover a lot in those nine months to a year working alongside somebody else of how to actually tell a story, as opposed to how you thought a story was told?

Clare: Yeah, absolutely. I have learnt so much. And I'm finding now, well having now written my second book and just starting my third, I wouldn't say I'm finding it easier, just that I'm getting better at writing. Which you know, is unsurprising if you learn anything for long enough, you will get better at it, one hopes.

I learnt a lot about structure, and about pace, and tension. Somehow knowing something in theory, and I'd read a number of books about writing and I learned about three act structures, but it's very, very different I think reading about that on the page, and then actually tearing apart your own part with the help of an experienced editor and putting it back in such a way that the tension changes completely.

Sometimes it's a really simple thing. It's putting in a very short chapter in between two longer ones. It's varying the sentence length. It's taking a break from one narrative thread at a moment of high tension and going across to another that's working at a slightly different pace so that the reader is frustrated by the changing story and wanting to get back to the original one. There are lots of things that I'd learnt, that perhaps I'd read about, but hadn't really made sense to me until I did it myself.

James: You started off with thinking you wanted to write something a little bit darker, and I think there was a particular case back in Bristol, a hit and run that was on your mind when you first started as a policeman, policewoman I should say. Police person? I don't know what to say.

Clare: Police officer.

James: Police officer, there you go, police offer. You've referred also to your own loss in your family. You talk about grief being one of those topics

that can become more consuming, was part of your ideas going into the book.

Did those themes survive the rewrite? Were they enhanced by it?

Clare: Yes absolutely. I probably wasn't really aware of the themes when I started writing *I Let You Go*. There were things I wanted to explore as you say, there was a hit and run that had just left me with questions. Why does someone drive off from a hit and run? What goes through their head? How does that change you as a person? How do you live with that? Lots of questions.

My own bereavement was very fresh, and I was acutely aware of how trauma and tragedy change you as a person. I was exploring those, but they definitely came out. They came to the fore in the editing process when perhaps I would look at them, almost in isolation, and look at how I was reflecting those in the book, what metaphors I was using, how the landscape I was describing was mirroring the emotions that were being explored in a particular character.

That level of detail, I'm sure there are writers that can put that in, in a first or second draft, but for me that's very much the coloring-in that I might do after I've written the book a couple of times. Whereas now I'm probably a bit more aware of those themes earlier on. I suspect I weave them in. Certainly my second book I had four drafts on, so I'm optimistic that perhaps my third book might just have two or three, and now I'm just about to start book three. There is a very strong theme of separation, I'm very aware of it, so I suspect again that will be stronger from the outset. We're all learning all the time aren't we?

James: Yeah, absolutely. You signed a two book deal with Little Brown, I think, when you sold *I Let You Go*. You've done your second book, *I Can See You*, I think, I haven't got it in front of me, I think is your second, right?

Mark: I See You.

James: I See You. Sorry.

Did you extend it, or have you done another deal with them?

Clare: I have signed another two book deal with them.

James: Okay. Fantastic. It's the route we certainly recommend if it's open to you at the right price and so on.

But out of the corner of your eye, are you looking at the self-publishing world and wondering how that operates?

Clare: Out of the corner of my eye? Only in the same way that I am looking at everything and the world around me out of the corner of my eye. It's not a route that I wanted to go down right at the start. It's not a route that at the moment, I would consider purely because I'm having a truly enjoyable and rewarding experience being traditionally published, both from a team point of view, from a financial point of view, from a career point of view. There is nothing about my publishing journey that is not working for me. Equally it's not something I would ever rule out.

I'm hugely impressed by those who are self-published, and doing it very, very well. There are a lot of books out there that are self-published and probably shouldn't be published, just there are an awful lot of books that are traditionally and perhaps shouldn't be. I'd like to see a little bit more merging of the two camps. I think it's a little bit too them and us. I don't like that very much. I think we're published authors, and we've all got a lot to learn from each other. I think it's a shame that the two camps are rather divided.

Mark: I agree with that. The way I look at it is all we're doing is telling stories and the means of delivery, that's the only difference. You can either deliver

it yourself by way of a platform like Amazon or Apple, or you can rely on a traditional publisher to take care of the distribution for you. At the end of the day it's providing interesting, and exciting, and engaging stories for readers. That's what we're aiming to do.

Clare: Yeah absolutely. For me a big part of my career, I suppose, is print. I'm a huge fan of digital and my digital sales are very important, but for the moment, where I am, is print. Being *I Let You Go* was a Sunday Times best seller last year for twelve weeks, and that obviously is purely down to print sales, not digital.

If I were to be self-published, that would be much, much harder to achieve. I'm sure you'll know far more than me about people that perhaps have achieved it, but I'm hugely grateful to my publishing team who are out there, putting me into WHSmith, putting me into super markets, into independent bookshops, into the hands of readers who are subsequently putting me in the Sunday Times top ten. I would be very reluctant to walk away from that sort of strategy at the moment.

Mark: Yeah, that's something I noticed before we met, that actually it was impossible to go past the branch of Smith's without seeing a poster in the window for the book, and then you go into the shelves, it's very prominently displayed. Obviously selling an enormous amount of copies, which was great to see.

You said about how things are coming apart, or things are still apart, but hopefully coming together, that's where we met, wasn't it? We went to Apple, you hosted an event for some authors. On the one hand we had some traditional authors, and on the other hand we had some self-publishers like me, and Joanna Penn was there.

We got talking about, I think we had a chat about Facebook ads, didn't we, and mailing lists, and that kind of thing?

Clare: Yeah.

Mark: You run your mailing list yourself. This isn't something that is handed off to the publisher, this is something that you engage with yourself, isn't it?

Clare: It is. I do take quite a lot of control of my career. I feel very strongly, this is my career, not somebody else's. It's not something that's being done to me. My mailing list is mine. I encourage people to sign up for my book club, I send a quarterly newsletter. I make that newsletter informative, entertaining, useful, not just as a promotional tool. My approach is very much like the extra DVD that you might get in a box set, the behind the scenes stuff, the deleted scenes.

I will send out deleted scenes from *I Let You Go*, scenes that I cut because for whatever reason they weren't needed, or an extra short story, or something, video interviews, that is actually worthwhile someone signing up. That's very much under my control. My social media strategy has always been very clear. I set myself goals, I look at how I'm going to achieve them, and I check how I'm doing every sort of three months. I think what I'm saying I would quite enjoy the elements of self-publishing that I do at the moment. The marketing side, I'm just not quite sure I'd want to leap into it whole heartedly.

Mark: Talk about your mailing list.

How do you build that? Is it, you have a call to action in the back of the books?

Clare: I do. That scenario where I know a lot of self-publish authors are incredibly strong, and I'm watching and learning all the time. I have a clickable link from my e-books, which goes to my book club page. It also appears in the back of my print books, it's on all my promotional bookmarks, postcards, anything like that, that's produced. That's both in the U.K. and in the States. For example I'm just looking on my desk at full page adverts that might U.S. publishers took out in the *New York Times*, which has my web link at the bottom.

Mark: Nice.

Clare: Those sorts of things work really well, just before a newsletter, when I know what the content is likely to be in it, I will do a Facebook advert and a call to action there. I'll do giveaways. Twitter works very, very strongly for me for signups. It's an area that I can still do, there's lots more I can do. It's on my list.

James: Your to do list. I don't want to pry.

Does your deal take account of the fact that you do a lot of the marketing. You're certainly doing a lot of the front end digital marketing for the books?

Clare: That's a hard thing to quantify, but I would say yes, I think actually it does for any deal nowadays. I remember the very first meeting I had with my acquiring editor, just at the point when she was deciding whether or not to offer on my first deal, and I remember being taken aback that I was asked as much about me, and my contacts, my plans, my social media, my online presence, my marketing savvy, as I was about my writing, and this book.

It just brought home to me that when traditional publishers are considering a deal, they're looking at you as a package. They're looking at what you can offer as a career author. They're not just looking at your book. I think that first deal certainly was about me as a person as well as me as a book.

Yes, going forward, once my publishers had worked with me for eighteen months. It was very clear. They knew how I worked, they knew what I was capable of. They knew how I worked and they liked it, and I liked working with them. It's definitely passive of the deal.

Mark: When you were at that stage, what kind of, I think I've seen it described as what's your platform like. What's your Twitter presence, Facebook, all that kind of stuff.

What kind of level were you at that that stage. Did you have followers, or were you at the beginning stage?

Clare: I did. In fact, somewhere I will have some of my social media strategies for that particular period, which will tell me exactly how many followers I had, and what I was aiming to achieve over the next quarter. I had to change slightly because earlier when we mentioned my mediocre chick lit book. I had written this excellent romantic comedy, and at the time I was doing freelance journalism, I was writing funny stuff. I was writing a very funny blog and wrote this romantic comedy. My whole strategy was around building the sort of audience that read those sorts of books. When I switched, I had to rebrand essentially.

I had to change my name. I was writing under a different name. I had to gradually slide my social media activity over from the sort of slightly tongue and cheek, self-deprecating, stay at home mom type content over to a slightly more thoughtful, more sinister content. That took time. That took about twelve months.

In a way, it was good that I had this long editing process after I got my deal, because I needed to handle all of that. I still follow a lot of rom-com authors, and readers, and there really is a strong crossover actually between the two genres. It's not quite as distinct as perhaps moving from science fiction, or fantasy, to I don't know, to crime, or to comedy, but I had to do that and focus on building the sort of audience that I wanted for this particular genre of writing.

Mark: I'm just looking at your Facebook page now actually. It's really good. A lot of really excellent content. I'm just seeing you posted a photograph of an idea for a book that you've written in the back of a spiral-bound notebook or something?

Clare: Yeah, that was the very first idea for I Let You Go.

Mark: That's great. All the kind of content, readers absolutely love that. It establishes a connection between the reader and the writer. I think that's really excellent, and so easy to do.

It's so easy to make that kind of content available these days. You get really tangible results from it.

Clare: Yeah you do. I'm a huge fan of Facebook and I actually, I don't have a huge following there. I've got about fifteen hundred, sixteen hundred followers on Facebook, but they are incredibly engaged. My reach is very high. My reach from a post might be perhaps ten thousand, maybe twenty thousand from quite a small number of people, just because there's a lot of engagement, a lot of commenting, a lot of sharing. It's very useful to me as a promotional tool, but it's also the area I enjoy most. I have some sort of genuine conversations with readers, I use them a lot for research and for ideas.

If I'm stuck with a character name, they were very helpful. I've worked out of a penthouse that I wanted, a London penthouse I wanted in my book and I had the view from the terrace, but I'm not a Londoner, I don't know where all these places are, but my Facebook followers do. Those sorts of things are genuinely useful. Of course, mixed in with that is some of the sort of sharing of more promotional activities. Books being for sale, or on special offer, but mostly I consider Facebook to be my social environment where I get to chat to readers.

Mark: Are you more of a Facebook than Twitter person?

Clare: I'm both, and really equally enthusiastic, just the different purposes. Twitter is more ... I chat more generally about it with a wider group of people. A lot of non-readers. I would say that probably everybody on my Facebook page has read my book, whereas most of the people who follow me on Twitter, perhaps haven't. It's a very different mix of people. I use them for different things. I tend to be a lot more visual with Facebook and

have more protracted conversations, whereas Twitter's much more dynamic.

I share a lot of content that is related to more personal interests, a lot of news articles, those sorts of things that wouldn't be appropriate on my Facebook page. I'm deeply averse to sharing the same content across lots of social media platforms, unless it genuinely works on all those platforms. Something that fills me with horror is when I see social media advisors or consultants recommending that people use something like Hootsuite to just throw out the same content across all your platforms because it shows no understanding of how those platforms work individually, or how the timings might work, or the audiences might be different. I think it's rather bad advice.

Mark: The content needs to be native, by which I mean it needs to fit in with people would expect to find on those platforms.

Clare: Absolutely.

Mark: Snippets of conversation on Twitter, more in-depth, and articles, and photographs, and visual things on Facebook.

Clare: Absolutely. It may be that you share the same thing, but in a different way.

James: I notice that you're giving a course in France later in the year for crime writers.

Is there a a non-fiction, non-writing income stream opening up for you? Is that something you see in your future?

Clare: You know, oddly enough, I was thinking about this this morning. It's actually something I want to wind down, or need to wind down because I just don't have the time to do it. I am doing this course, and I'm doing it

because Chez Castillon is just the most beautiful, beautiful place in Southwest France. I've spent many happy retreats there where I got a phenomenal number of words written.

It's a joy to go and run a course, but my life is very, very full of writing and the promotional activity that accompanies books, as you know, is phenomenal, so at the moment I am supporting the release of *I Let You Go* in the States.

It's only been out now for two weeks. There's a lot of interviews, and blog posts, and just general stuff that needs to be done. I'm gearing up to the release of *I See You* in the U.K., so I've got dinners with print reviewers, I've got visits with sales reps, going out to bookshops, so a lot of pre-promotional activity. That's only going to build in July when the book comes out. I've got a lot of literary festivals, and signings, and other events. In between all of that, I obviously need to write my third book. I just don't have time to do the sorts of workshops and journalism that perhaps I used to.

Mark: Could I ask you, just look at how your typical day plays out, in terms of the split between writing on the one hand, and promotion and marketing on the other.

What does your day look like?

Clare: There is no typical day really. Today should be a writing day. I'm just at the start of book three, and I should really be able to get one or two thousand words written.

I always start off the same way. I did the dog walk and the school run, then back at my desk by 10 o'clock. We have this podcast scheduled for 11, so actually what I managed to do between 10 and 11 was get a few emails done. All book related stuff saying yes to interviews, responding to U.S.

publicists who are sharing information, a couple of foreign deals that have come in, I'm saying "Yes, great. Fantastic." Lots of those sorts of things. We've got this podcast now. I've got a lunch with a TV producer who's interested in putting I Let You Go on the screen. I will get probably an hour, maybe two hours work in this afternoon. I've got to prep for an interview that I'm doing tonight. I might, if I'm lucky, get an hour's writing in, which will probably, for me, equate to about five or six hundred words. Not hugely productive in terms of words, but a proper busy working day never the less.

Mark: We feel very guilty and also very grateful for you taking the time. Thank you for taking the time to talk to us this morning. How old are your children?

Clare: Nine, eight, and eight.

Mark: Okay, so when they get back from school then I guess it's back into mom mode?

Clare: Yeah, kind of. They're very good. They're very self-sufficient. If I'm on deadline they pretty much fend for themselves, and they know to forage if they need feeding. Mostly I do try and stop at 4 o'clock when they come home, but I'm not very good at switching off. Occasionally I will push on through.

Mark: That's something I'm definitely with you on that one. It is difficult to switch off sometimes. My kids are four and two.

Clare: Oh that's hard work. They're still quite needy aren't they, at that age? Quite rightly so.

Mark: They are. My son's just getting over chickenpox so he's very cuddly at the moment.

Clare: I secretly quite like it when my children are ill. I know that sounds awful, it's not from a Munchhausen's kind of way, but that's because they become so cuddly, and quiet, and soft, and just delicious.

James: You need to train them in foraging Mark, so they can ...

Mark: They can roam free. Exactly.

James: You're over there in the Cotswolds, I believe Clare. Is that right?

Clare: I am, yeah. In Chipping Norton, not part of the Chipping Norton set.

James: Not part of the Chippy set, so Jeremy Clarkson's not your neighbor?

Clare: He is.

James: Oh, he is your neighbor? You just don't go for dinner very often?

Clare: No. Kitchen suppers are not something I get invited to.

James: You've got your two books obviously and as I say, *I See You*, is your second. You're working on your third.

Are you now set in a pattern of the darker side with crime and aspects of crime being very much a part of the way you're going to write? Do you see yourself perhaps moving genres at any point? Is chick lit ever going to come back to the horizon?

Clare: No. I don't think it will actually. I'm still a big advocate of chick lit, of commercial women's fiction, it should be called, because it's fun, and enjoyable, and quite escapist. But I think for the time being darker is where I'm at. Psychological thrillers are satisfying for me to read, and they're satisfying to write, and challenging to write, so yes.

Definitely for the moment there's a book I want to write that isn't a thriller. Doesn't have a crime element. I'm not quite sure, I think it's probably, I think you would call it high concept commercial fiction. At some point I will write that, but for now I'm firmly rooted in the crime world.

James: Okay. You say you're on the Twitter [Clare Mackint0sh](#) with a zero instead of the O? @ClareMackint0sh?

Clare: Yes.

James: You've just replaced the O with a zero.

Mark: On Facebook it's ClareMackWrites.

Clare: Yes, I've broken one of the golden rules of course, of your social media platforms, which is to make sure that they're consistent across every platform. I apologize.

James: You're famous enough now that a Google of Clare Mackintosh will reveal all of these things.

Clare: You can't escape me. I'm everywhere.

James: Clare it's been really interesting talking to you. I think particularly about the initial journey that you took from writing a book to turning it into the book that got sold. I think that whether you're doing that by yourself or you've got the, I'll say the luxury, or the experience of having a very experienced literary agent and editor with you, or not. That's definitely something I'm thinking about in terms of writing, about the drafting, and the redrafting, and then finding a way of making those themes come through, which is what the book's all about.

The story is just a vessel really isn't it for those themes you leave people with?

Clare: Yeah. Absolutely.

James: I found that really interesting. Thank you very much indeed from your very busy life. I hope your children, I presume, are at school rather than foraging for food in the garden.

Clare: They are indeed at school, but it was a real pleasure to talk to you both. I was delighted to be invited and it's been lovely to chat.

James: Clare Mackintosh, so fantastic for her. Really pleased that she's having the success, and she talked about trying to break America, and we'll find out in due course from her how she's getting on with that. It's been a slow start she experienced in the United Kingdom, but I have no doubt she's going to be big around the world. Very happy with her traditional deal.

We didn't really push her on that. I felt a little bit like we were talking to somebody who had felt she had done everything right by getting this amazing publishing deal, and yet I sense the world is moving towards, certainly from a commercial point of view, and we can think of one or two of our own students who've probably sold fewer books but made more money, to a different way of doing things. It's not for everybody, and for Clare, this is a perfect fit for her isn't it?

Mark: Yeah, she's done amazingly well. The latest author earnings report this week and it made it very, very clear from the analysis of Amazon's data that authors who have started in the last five years are much, much more likely to make a significant living, or a living, really by self-publishing rather than traditional publishing. The odds are much more in their favor that way, but yeah, sure it's not for everyone.

Clare's done amazingly well. She's got a great agent, got a great publisher, they've knocked it out of the park as far as marketing. Why would she be interested in changing? There's no reason at all why she should.

But my advice would still typically be, I think for most writers, is to at least look carefully at self-publishing because even at the base level, seventy percent royalty, as opposed to ten or twelve percent royalty is going to look quite a bit more attractive if you start selling a good number of books.

James: Right, and talking of selling books, we should say that time is running out if people do want to buy into Mark's premiere course Facebook Ads for Authors, which is wrapped up with Twitter Ads for Authors, and on the way down YouTube Ads for Authors. We're in the last few hours and days, aren't we, of this launch?

Mark: Yeah, we close the carts, it'll either be on the thirteenth of June, or when we hit the limit for the students we feel comfortable accommodating this time. Which might happen over the weekend, possibly.

If people are interested then they should go over to the site.

It's selfpublishingformula.com. There's a banner there you can click to go and have a look at the sales page, which has testimonials, details on the course, a video from me talking about what students can expect to find inside, and if there are any questions people have, then they can drop us a line at support@selfpublishingformula.com and it will come to me if necessary, or you James, or John can handle those too. Plenty of ways for people to get in touch with us.

James: Yes, and don't forget Alexandra, who's also part of the SPF team and may answer your emails.

Mark: Absolutely.

James: Okay, that's great. We've got more work to do over the next few days and then we've got hundreds of students who are going to be taking their first steps, or maybe their first advanced steps in Facebook

advertising, and so on over the next few weeks. Loads of good interviews and topics still to come on the podcast. They're every Friday.

Don't hesitate, if you want to contact us, particularly if there's a subject area you would like to hear us talking about or an interview you'd like to hear. You can always email us support@selfpublishingformula.com. Well, we'll see you next time when we will be well rested.

Mark: It will be the week before we go on holiday, so yes. I will be looking forward to being well rested.

Speaker 9: You've been listening to the Self Publishing Formula podcast. Visit us at selfpublishingformula.com for more information, show notes, and links on today's topics. You can also sign up for our free video series on using Facebook ads to grow your mailing list. If you've enjoyed the show, please consider leaving us a review on iTunes. We'll see you next time.