

PODCAST 32 ELICIA HYDER'S INSPIRATIONAL SELF PUBLISHING SUCCESS STORY

Mark: The Self Publishing Formula is looking for beta testers for its 101 course on self publishing. After the success of the advanced Facebook ads for authors course, Mark Dawson is now creating a course aimed solely at authors who are starting out.

If you're trying to launch your first book or trying to become commercially successful with your books, then this course is for you. It will cover everything you need to set yourself up for success as an indie author. Beta testers will get the course for free in return for feedback. You can sign up for your chance to become a tester at selfpublishingformula.com and we'll notify those selected.

Hello and welcome to podcast number 32 from The Self Publishing Formula.

Female: 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, Mark and I have just returned from sunny Florida. It's very sunny Florida, wasn't it Mark?

Mark: It was gorgeous, very sunny.

James: It was like mid 90s everyday, which is melting point for anyone from our part of Europe and I don't know what percentage humidity it was, but close to a 100 and you and I both went for runs at various points, and I don't know about you, but I came back as if I've been swimming.

Mark: I did actually get to go swimming as well, so that was my favorite. In some ways, it was going out for a run because I was waking up at dawn because my body clock didn't quite get around to American time and then going for a run about half 6 in the morning and then going for a swim. It was, this water was so warm, my god, it was amazing.

James: What you talking about swimming in the sea or your swimming pool?

Mark: In the sea.

James: Were you not alarmed by the various signs that said this is stingray season, that you have to walk in a certain way in the sea to avoid treading on a stingray.

Mark: The stingray shuffle. No, not really, I've been to the Maldives more than once, so there's loads and loads of stingrays, at least as long as your careful, it's not really a problem.

James: Yeah, I saw one when I was running.

Mark: Yes, I saw some as well.

James: In the shallows though, which was enough for me to think I'll have a little swim in the pool and I got back to my salubrious hotel. I say salubrious hotel. I was slumming it next door to your properly salubrious hotel, so you were at the Trade Winds. Let me just set out then how this podcast is going to work, so we met up live at St. Pete, myself and John Dyer, the three people who run Self Publishing Formula. It was the first time that we had a properly been to a live event where we invited anybody you will know from previous podcasts, if you listen to the podcast, you've taken the course, or you're part of the Facebook group, et cetera, to come and say hello. That evening went absolutely brilliantly, it was such fun. As well as the whole event. Lots of people came and tapped us on the shoulder and

introduced themselves, and that gave us a lot of opportunity to record some interviews with some really interesting stories and people.

One particular person, called Elicia Hyder tapped you on the shoulder, Mark and you had a chat with her and she told you her story. We decided straightaway that we have to share her story because it was wonderful. Please stick around for that, you're going to hear Elicia talking, the feature interview in this podcast and it's an interview you won't to miss for lots of reasons, so that's coming up in a moment.

Before we do that, let's reflect a bit on SPF live. So first of all, NINC, which we should say Mark, is Novelist Incorporated, Novelist Inc. it's a criteria membership. For instance, I could only go to the first day, which was the Thursday, whereas the conference itself had other sessions including advanced sessions, one of which was lead by you, for members. What is the criteria? I think you got to have 2 or 3 published books, is that right?

Mark: Published books and have sold, I think 5,000 dollars, something like that.

James: Okay, so you basically are on the selling side of professional authorship, which I'm not yet and I know a few people listen to the podcast won't be there yet, others will be. A very author-centric conference, which I really like, so lots of people talk about writing, and publishing, as well as marketing and so on. It wasn't just done from like the book fairs, for instance, which really come from a publishing perspective. You led a session on Facebook advertising, of course and how did that go down?

Mark: I did three sections actually. Yeah, I was on a panel on the first day talking about, looking at 7 people submitted their marketing problems and 3 of us in the panel plus someone who moderated it, looked at the problems and made some suggestions, so did that on the Thursday. Then on the Friday, I did 2 hours on Facebook ads, which when I actually realized that I was been asked to do 2 hours. I thought that might be a little bit

ambitious, but as it turned out, it was plenty of time. I had stuff in the locker that I could have brought out if necessary, but no it was great. I loved all of it.

The session on the Thursday was quite interesting because I hadn't been to NINC before and I did find it quite difficult to get an idea of the level of the attendees and as soon as I looked through the case studies, I realized that they were probably, it's easy to generalize obviously, there are plenty of people who are selling more than I am and who are better at marketing than I am.

But converse of that, there were plenty of people who didn't really know the first thing about things like mailing lists, and covers, and all that kind of stuff. It was quite difficult to pitch the advice that we were giving in the first session and then it was quite hard for me to pitch the Facebook advertising session because that obviously is reasonably advanced author strategy, but what I ended up doing was breaking it down into a basic mailing list growth session in the first hour and then I did, I think it was 13 things that are working on Facebook right now in the second hour.

Things like live video. I did a Facebook live demonstration from the stage, which thankfully worked after a bit of fiddling. That went down quite well and then looking at things like targeting, tracking, all that kind of stuff. All of the things that are working really well, the things that's Facebook's doing well right now and by the of it, it was great.

I sat down and BookBub were the next ones up. Katie Donelan from BookBub and slightly surreal to see BookBub using me as one of their case studies for their ads program, which was, it was nice. I had a good chat with them beforehand as well.

James: Well we know you've arrived and the industry, but that's certainly confirmation that. My observation from sitting there listening to the first panel, and I should say even though I'm not a member of NINC, I did sneak

in on the basis of I'm going to take some snaps of you for some of the other sessions.

My observations straightaway was that we surround ourselves with people who are really at leading edge of digital marketing for their books. They're either Facebook advertising, they're thinking about it, they're into social media advertising, they want a piece of the action. They understand that this is where people are growing their lists, and growing their sales, and making their living.

Yet walking into the room at NINC, and I would say maybe 50 to maybe 75% of the room felt to me quite resistant to that kind of new way of doing, for what they consider as a new way of doing things. 25% of the room definitely all over it.

Mark: No, I don't think, resistance is the wrong word. I think curious. I mean there was an example in the first session I did, the Q and A, when I said something, there's a question about one of the authors there had done a deal with a publisher and all they bought was the first book in her series and she said what should I do? How can I get them to promote it? My first reaction to that was that's a bad deal because if the publisher doesn't push the first book and it's not successful, number 1, it might not be your fault, and number 2, if they don't want to publish the second book, then you're going to have a hell of a struggle promoting series where you don't control the first book.

My kind of, slightly off the curve reaction to that was that's a bad deal. I wouldn't be interested in a traditional deal like that. That was without me really thinking that the person next to me was owns and runs a small independent press, so that was kind of, I tempered my language after that, but it was, I think they were definitely interested in what we had to say. I did have a few people afterwards, because there's a couple of the questions in that first panel, I didn't get to speak because the other two panelist were quite enthusiastic about answering those particular

problems. A couple people afterwards came up to me and say, "Look, there were people in the audience who were just saying, I wish they'd let Mark speak," which was, that's quite, it's very flattering. I think it doesn't, it didn't necessarily have to be me saying that. I think it could have been anyone from our community really switched on with as you said social media advertising and the new ways of doing things. That was what they were interested in. It was about mailing lists and advertising and it wasn't necessarily, they weren't fixated upon tradition deal and what a publisher could do for them.

James: Yeah, I suppose the point I was making is that for someone like me, who's on their way towards launching themselves into this market, we are so surrounded by people who are doing it successfully or trying to do it now. There's a fear maybe that this is a saturated market and it's almost too late, you missed the bus.

Then you have a sense briefly of the wider, author world and realize it's a fraction. It's 25% of the room at most, I think are really on top of this. Resistance is absolutely the wrong word. The others want to be a part of it. Some, 1 or 2 were, I just sensed in some of the comments, 1 or 2 were kind of thought it was like witchcraft or something.

Mark: It is like witchcraft. I'm regularly sacrificing virgins in the garden.

James: Yeah, exactly I know that was what Stonehenge was all about, but that's an exciting prospect and I felt quite buoyed by that. It reminded me, reinforced the fact, that we are the leading edge. If you're listening to this podcast, you already have a significant advantage over many, many other authors, fellow authors, so that was a positive message I think.

Mark: Yeah, definitely that is something that is worth remembering and I often forget it because we associate ourselves with other successful self published authors, that those are the people that I listen to or all of the

Facebook groups that we run full of people interested in doing the things that we're doing.

It is very easy to draw your focus in too closely and then not see that the majority, that we are vanguard, the majority of people don't know what a mailing list is. That's so basic, I almost can't get my head around that, but that is the truth of it. Some people don't know what a mailing list is. That's the most fundamentally important asset that any author can have. It's not just an independently published author, any author whatsoever.

James: Good and now let's talk a little bit about SPF, this is going to be a little bit course centric, so I'm not going to apologize for that, it just is the way it is that we got quite a lot of students who've taken the course and had really successful launches with it and I'm going to say it's changed their lives because that's what they said to us when they came and say hello to us at our party or the people that John Dyer and I dropped in on our way down.

We drove down from New York having met the Teachable crew in New York and we dropped in on several authors and "You've changed my life," was something we heard more than once, so that's great. It's a little bit unapologetically this bit is going to be about the course and Elicia's interview coming up in a moment, but it was very impressive to be drinking a beer at night surrounded by people who are making 50,000 dollars a month, 30,000 dollars a month, 20, 30,000 dollars a month if you go around the table, spending maybe 5,000 on the Facebook ads and who's careers have just shot off stratospherically and their making not just a living, which I think is an admirable aim, I will be aiming for is to be make a normal salary.

I'll be delighted if I can do that, but here's people who thought that was their dream 18 months ago, and now are making what you might describe as a good city salary. The kind of thing that you read about in the papers. It was incredible. Impressive people right?

Mark: Yeah, there was a real highlight. I mean we basically threw a party on the, was it the Tuesday night or Wednesday night?

James: The Wednesday night.

Mark: Wednesday night. We took over one of the bars in the resorts. I don't know exactly how many people came, but probably we must have cycled through 120 over the course of the evening.

James: I've got the bar bill if that's anything and that would back that up, yes.

Mark: It was a reasonable bar bill, but we thought that was the least we could do was to cover that. The numbers were great. We had all the Draft2Digital guys came, so Chris, Kevin, Aaron, Dan Wood. We had Mark from Kobo came. Plenty of the industry guys came.

And then beyond that, we had people who'd come not to the conference, but to come meet us, which was, we had Michelle drove 4 hours to come to see us. We had Shawn flew in from Atlanta specifically to have breakfast with us and then to leave the same day, I think. We had Clint, Nathan Vancoops came along. We had plenty of people who are in the Florida region.

In fact, Elicia came. She came specifically with her mum, just to come and meet us and that was really flattering and got to hear some really fabulous stories and some success stories, apart from the ones that the guys that you met as you made your midlife crisis road trip down the east coast. It is really wonderful to hear these people, who as you say have earned enough money to change their lives through fairly simple advertising program, really wonderful to hear that.

James: Yeah, it was really good and what was interesting, I think it was quite good for NINC as well because people like Elicia and Michelle who

you just mentioned, didn't really know about NINC, but they now know about it through us, so they're going to be quite keen I think to be a bigger part of it in the future, so quite a few authors on the doorstep their in Orlando.

John and I then picked up a final interview over on the west coast with Charlotte Byrd, who's another stellar student of the course, who obviously got the right books and she was commercially minded and orientated about it from the beginning. She chose her genre, romance, I think bordering on erotic romance for her, she chose her genre based on what was going to work commercially and she hadn't even read romance. She wasn't a romance reader before she started.

She's got 3 books and she's now doing an average 10,000 dollar month. She's had some really big months in the past and will be very, very successful in the future thanks to Facebook advertising, which we mention from time to time, Facebook advertising.

Mark: Doesn't work.

James: It doesn't work. You do hear that. It is the key to digital online marketing and that's not just in the author space, but it is still at the moment is the key. We've got our fingers in lots of social media advertising pies and we're expanding that all the time, but understanding, getting to go to Facebook ads still is what you should be thinking about if you're serious about earning money from your career.

Mark: Yep, absolutely, couldn't agree more.

James: Okay, look I promised you this interview with Elicia.

Elicia came up and spoke to Mark and then I talked to her, not only did I get to do a sit down video interview with Elicia for our own purposes really for marketing the course because she's been a really successful story for us,

her story was so touching and she was such a wonderful person that we wanted to share her story with you, so that's going to be our feature in for you today.

Elicia: I had completed the first two books in the Soul Summoner series, completed writing them and went through rounds of editing and decided I'm going to pitch this book to my three top picks of agents. Did a lot of research, found out who those people were. We won't name names, but I did and within three days of sending that email, I heard back from one of them. That was like, "Hey, let's talk about this book," which, you know I'm freaking out.

James: That's an amazing response.

Elicia: Totally, yeah, absolutely. Astounding response because that just doesn't happen. It's not the norm in this business, so I called everybody that I knew and told them somebody's interested in my book and then six hours later, the same day, during dinner, I got another phone call from my doctor saying we think it's cancer. We need you to come back in in the morning for some more tests.

I had been going through different tests for some suspicious lumps and bumps where they shouldn't be and it turned out it was cancer. I had to call everybody back, this time in tears for a completely different reason, because it was certain at that point that I was getting ready to go through a really big battle.

James: An interesting day in your life that you won't forget.

Elicia: The best of times, the worst of times.

James: Good stuff for a book.

Elicia: It is, it is. I wonder if anybody's every done that.

James: You decided obviously you had to put the book publishing on hold at that point.

Elicia: Yeah, I contacted the agency and I was like, "Ha, funny story, I just got a cancer diagnosis right after I talked to you and so I'm going to have to put the book on hold for now and try not to die," and so they did, as the industry is. They don't have time to wait and they were like, "Well be in touch when this is all over with and we wish you luck, peace out," you know. I thought that everything was just at that point, like we're going to have to start over and however long it takes me to beat this thing, so it was really disheartening. But the best thing that I took away from it is I knew this book has potential. This book can go places.

Before I became a writer, I was in graphic and web design for 13 years, so I knew a bit about marketing, online marketing, knew nothing about book marketing, but I knew because every query, how to website tells you you need to have a platform. You need to have people to market this book to to make it appealing to a publisher, so I started googling, how to build your platform and I knew, email's keen. You need to start building an email list. I had an email list at that time and it was six people, one of them was me, one of them was my mom, the other one was my sister.

James: That's a familiar story from when people start.

Elicia: Totally, I'm sure. Absolutely, but I did some googling, how to build your email following as a writer and I found Joanna Penn. I started just tearing through her website. Reading her books like, I'm like oh my gosh, this is a goldmine of information.

In one of her interviews that she did, she talked to Nick Stevenson, and I'm like okay, well he's got this free series out there, these freebies. We'll see, it's free. Well I got his three videos and by the end of listening to them, about a week later I had gone from six subscribers to 60 and I ended up publishing a book that I never intended to publish to try to build that

following based on his advice and it really just kind of snowballed. It was really unexpected.

James: Was this a giveaway you published?

Elicia: I actually published the book first on Wattpad because my niece, who's 15 loves Wattpad and she's like, "Hey, put your book on this website because I want to read it," and I literally just did it for her and then people started finding it and reading it and then it ended up winning best contemporary adult romance in 2015 for Wattpad.

James: Thanks to your niece.

Elicia: Right, yeah, completely. That was kind of the springboard into starting to find followers and then with Nick building the mailing list and then Nick interviewed Mark and Mark started talking about Facebook advertising and I'm like ha ha, I can do this, like I have a background in this stuff, I can do this. I don't need Mark Dawson. I have 13 years experience.

James: Who needs Mark Dawson.

Elicia: Who needs Mark Dawson. Thanks for the tip, thanks for telling me it was there. I got this. I didn't sign up for Mark's course, the first go around. I'm going to figure this out and I wasted probably 2,000 dollars in failed Facebook ads and I could not figure out why they were failing. I knew that it was, there's one puzzle piece in there and I don't know what that puzzle piece is, but I'll bet Mark Dawson knows. I started emailing, I'm like please let me in the course, I'm really sorry I didn't sign up the first time, I am humbled and ashamed, please let me in. You guys didn't let me in.

James: Sorry about that, I don't know what to say really apart from we're hard, hard nosed.

Elicia: Totally, like sign up while you can because they mean it when they say it's limited.

James: We get the course ready for launch and it's in a right state in between when we're doing the update, so it wouldn't be right to sell you in incomplete, not updated course, that's my excuse.

Elicia: I agree, but whatever helps you sleep at night.

James: On that before we move into when you moved forward to Mark's instruction, just tell us where you are with your treatment at this stage?

Elicia: I am almost declared cancer free. I had Hodgkin's lymphoma, which is one of the few cancers that they use the word curable with. It's a brutal treatment. I was very, very sick. I'm at a high risk for a lot of stuff because of the treatment, but I have to have one more PET scan in December, and if that one's clear, then I don't have to have anymore. I've had 2 clear PET scans, no evidence of cancer, so that's huge.

James: Well from all of us at SPF, we wish you all the best with that. That's really good news to hear, so let's focus on the positives, well that's another positive. That's the most important positive is that you're well on the road to recovery.

You got to the point then where you wasted a bit of money, tried to make Facebook ads work and that didn't really work for you.

Elicia: Well backing up too, when it came time to publish that book that the agent was interested in, I ended up turning down going the traditional route, because the advice had worked so well. I'm like I can do this on my own and the last bit of that puzzle trying to figure out was the bit that I was missing of Facebook advertising.

Once I finally got into the course, I found that missing puzzle piece on the first day and I'm like oh my gosh, this is what I've been doing wrong, and so I was able to go and tweak those ads and fix them and set things up the right away, and using his strategies on how to monitor those ads, it made all the difference in the world. Absolutely made all the difference in the world.

I had done really well with Lead Generation Ads before I joined the course, but as far as actually selling books, I could not move books. I couldn't hardly give them away.

James: What was it? What were the techniques that you got from Mark that made the difference?

Elicia: Do you want me to tell people that missing puzzle thing?

James: Let's hint at it.

Elicia: There were some really specific tools that are out there and that are hidden to mere mortals that even a person with my background, I didn't even know existed. I knew that in theory, these tools had to be out there, but I had no idea where to go find them. I had no idea how to set them up and once I was given that map, to be like okay this is where you find that pot of gold, it's right here. Then it rocking and rolling since then.

James: The treasure map.

Elicia: Yeah.

James: Can you clue us in a little bit, using an American type expression, on what sort of income and figures you're getting now?

Elicia: When I first started this, it took me about five months to sell enough books to buy a new mailbox for my front yard and I'm standing like happy

dancing at Home Depot because oh my gosh I'm using 114 dollars of my book money to buy a new mailbox.

James: That felt like free money to you.

Elicia: Totally, like I was, that was better than the New York Times.

James: Now you're making that in a couple of hours.

Elicia: I am spending about 5,000 dollars a month in advertising. This month will be my biggest and spend just on Facebook advertising. I'm probably spending 120 dollars a day, which is really small compared to a lot of people's ad spend and I will have, hopefully this will be my new biggest sales month, somewhere around 20,000 dollars, so that's 15,000 dollars in profit.

James: You're making 15,000 bucks a month on your books.

Elicia: I am. I like check my reports and just on Amazon sales alone, just Amazon sales alone, not counting, I have one book in Kindle Unlimited, not counting any of the other platforms, it's over 600 dollars a day, just in that. It's absolutely overwhelming. It's really, really overwhelming. But it's a lot of work too and a lot of people think that there's some sort of magic formula or that oh my god, she must have the best book ever, or Mark Dawson must just be the best author ever, which he's fantastic author, and my books aren't bad.

I've said this to other people, there's nothing special, really special about my work, like I'm never going to be on Oprah, never going to win any medals or anything like that.

James: You're on the SPF podcast, which is slightly better than Oprah right?

Elicia: Absolutely, oh my gosh. I didn't have pajamas or a toothbrush last night, I'm like I'm going to hang out and do the podcast.

James: I'm not sure how that comes across to people listening, but this did all start in a bar last night, but anyway, like all good stories. Let's just take you back for a second.

There's this day when you think you've got a breakthrough. You got an offer potentially coming from an agent which would lead to a traditional publishing deal. Then things go south for you with an illness, fast forward through to today.

I wonder how things would have worked out had you not had that phone call from the doctor? You may have had a traditional deal.

Elicia: I may have and I may have gotten a 8,000 dollar advance if I was lucky, probably more like 1,000 dollars for a non-published person with no following. With a decent book and then who knows if it would have earned out and if I would have seen another penny because nobody is going to work your brand the way that you do.

No publisher is going to invest in your future as a writer. They're going to invest in that book, and they're going to try to squeeze every penny that they can and then they're going to move onto the next author. I'm promoting the first book in my series, I just released book three and I'm promoting book one that I release a year ago, harder than I ever promoted it. That wouldn't have happened in the traditional world.

James: We should just point out that we are reclined on sun lounges.

Elicia: Totally, next to a tiki bar.

James: Next to a tiki bar on the beach.

Elicia: Looking at the ocean.

James: In Florida, but the reason I'm mentioning is because they're preparing the bar for opening, there's a lot of, I don't know how much ice they're shoveling into that thing, but it's making a lot of noise. Anyway, we'll have a cold one in a minute.

Just to reiterate what you said and we had this conversation just over a coffee, we've have these super author on, we've had Marie Force, Rachel Abbott recently.

When they start talking about the secret to their success, it always turns out to be the same thing. Which is what you've excelled at, which is really just working hard.

Elicia: It is working hard. People are really shocked and authors get really depressed when I tell them that secret. I work 17 hours a day, I'm a wife, I have five children. I have no college degree. I work really, really hard and I believe in what I'm doing. I have enough faith in my work.

I am passionate enough about it because I know I may get that phone call that the cancer's back and I might not beat it the next time. I'm investing everything that I've got because if the book fails, it's going to be because the book sucks. It's not going to be because I didn't give it it's very best chance.

I listen to a lot of constructive and some very deconstructive criticism from other writers, from other professionals. I had a book designer through Nick Stevenson look at my cover and go, "It sucks, like start over." As a designer myself that was really hard to hear, but he was right.

I redid the cover, sales started picking up. Reviews started coming in and like I said, it just snowballs. It builds, and builds, and builds, but you never quit. So many people, because you have really, really sucky days as an

author, you have really hard days where you're like why am I even doing this and a lot of people give up, but you have to believe in yourself. You have to believe in what you're doing and you have to be willing to put your time and your money where your heart is and work it.

James: It's a heartwarming story Elicia, and you're clearly motivated to work hard and beat things and I can't help but think that played a part in your beating the cancer and your success as an author and long may that continue. Let's have a 30,000 dollar month soon.

Elicia: Absolutely, let's please, please. I'm excited because for the first time, since the series started, 10 months ago, I'm out of Kindle Unlimited, so I'm really excited to see what happens on all of the other platforms now. Honestly, I really expected my sales and my rankings to just plummet after I pulled out, because I did really well on KU and it's gone up. It's done the exact opposite. Rather than going down, it's gone up, even my sales just on Amazon, so it's really encouraging, really, really encouraging because I know that, I'm just 10 months into this. I'm just in the beginning of my career. There's a lot of time ahead. There are a lot of books ahead. I'm very excited.

James: What a pleasure it was to talk to Elicia. As I said, we were laying on the sun decks because where else would you record a podcast interview in the middle of the afternoon, it's 95 fahrenheit. And as you heard and I mentioned in the interview, they were setting up the bar next to us and pouring ice into a large, hollow container to make it as loud as possible, but I could have spent all afternoon chatting to Elicia, listening to her story and we all send our positive thoughts to her.

What a fantastic story, her recovery from cancer coinciding with this getting to grips with Facebook advertising and as she said in the interview, had she not been diagnosed with this very serious cancer, she may have done that traditional deal and her life would not be where it is today.

Mark: Yeah and it's funny how things past sometimes. It's one of those situations where I hear stories like that, people come up to me and it's immediate. It's not like we have to share that, and there are other things that she didn't mention in the story that I won't mention now, but that just make her story even more remarkable. Some of the things that has happened to her, in her life and the things that she's done.

It's just kind of so impressive and I'm so pleased that she's really nailing it. One thing we did after, I was invited to dinner with the guys from Apple on the Thursday night and they said do you have another author who you would like to come along? My first thought was to see if she'd like to come and she stayed another night. She booked another night in the hotel and we had an amazing dinner with Apple, really, really wonderful, so I got to introduce her to those guys, and hopefully that will help her to broaden her reach, so that she can start to sell books on iBooks as well as on Amazon. Just such a lovely person, it was a real pleasure to get to know her.

James: Yeah, she's somebody who makes things happen for herself and it's no surprise at all and hear the interview, that she wasn't defeated by her illness and she's not going to be defeated by that and she's going to be successful in her career because she's got a husband who's serving with the military, who's gone I think until spring next year. They have five children between them at home and she gets on with business and she makes it work and I love the slightly ballsy element to her as well, which is that she decided she didn't need our course, she didn't need any help. Threw herself into it and very quickly after a couple thousand bucks realized that she did need some pointers and wow she has not looked back since she's unlocked the key to it.

If you want to look up Elicia, let's spell her name for you. It's E-l-c-i-a and her surname is Hyder, h-y-d-e-r-, paranormal romance, paranormal suspense and romance I should say. She's in our Facebook group as well, so you can say hello to her there. That was great.

We have gathered quite a lot of really interesting material during our time in Florida and the wider states and one of the things that I did is, as many authors as I can get to, I ask them a set of questions really about how they write, where they write, what sort of approach they have to writing, how they're marketing, who does their marketing, how they split their time. The same questions to lots of different authors.

We're going to put that together for a special podcast at some point, so you can just sit back or go on your run, put this in your ear and just listen to lots of different people doing the same thing that you're doing, talking about their particular approach to it, just to try to spark some interest and creativity in the way that we all think about how we approach our day writing and our careers as authors, so that's coming up soon.

We should also trail ahead, but we've got a very useful interview indeed. You haven't heard this one yet Mark, but it's a very useful interview indeed with a man called Ricardo Fiatt who is one of the co-founders of Readz, which you may have heard of. Readz is a one stop shop to find the professional services that you're going to need as a self published author, so we're talking about editing, proofing, book covers, et cetera. All the subjects that we deal with quite regularly and Ricardo did this brilliant interview where we just stepped through.

It was quite selfish because I'm thinking from my point of view what do I do next, then what do I do, then who do I need and Ricardo stepped us through that process, talked about how we should approach particular editors and what their roles would be, and how much they would cost. Not only does Ricardo talk about that entire process of everything you would need to go from your draft to getting your book published and into the market, but we have a very special announcement. We're going to save this as a secret for next week, Mark.

Mark: Yeah, let's save the details, but let's say it's worth listening. We're going to run to a contest with a pretty valuable prize. In fact, several quite valuable prizes, so it's definitely worth listening to next week's podcast.

James: Yeah, that'll be Ricardo next week, so thank you to our special guest, Elicia Hyder. Mark and I, I have slept 5 hours and 27, I think from where I'm sitting at the moment having landed at Heathrow from Los Angeles this morning, so I'm ready for bed. Actually weirdly I'm not, weirdly I'm now started waking up again. What do I do now? Do I drink? I don't know.

Mark: I'd get really drunk. That's got to be the solution. That's the solution to everything.

James: Yeah, it is the Dawson approach. Great, we'll speak to you next week.

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