

PODCAST 6: THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EXCEPTIONAL – WITH INDIE AUTHOR RUSSELL BLAKE

James: We're into April, Mark. It's becoming Spring; well, at least, it's becoming Spring at 52 degrees North, where we are. Of course, you might be in Australia, in which case you're looking ahead to Autumn, but nonetheless, it's a changing time of year. It feels kind of optimistic now; I think things are happening while the podcast is getting going, which is exciting.

Mark: Yeah, we're really pleased with the response we've had from listeners; more downloads than we expected at this stage, which is really gratifying. I've had some lovely emails and messages on the selfpublishingformula.com page, so thanks for that. Keep listening.

James: We've had some great feedback. We often pick authors off and talk about, "You should write for yourself." In a way, we're sort of doing a podcast for ourselves, aren't we, because the interviews ... We are really enjoying doing them and gleaning a lot and today is no exception. Before we move on to today's podcast, just want to ask you a little bit about [London Book Fair](#). I know you went last year and you're planning to go again this year. What's in store for you at LBF, which is ... would you say, Olympia around 12th to 14th of April.

Mark: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. I'm going to be there again this year. I'm speaking on the Amazon panel on the Tuesday and Wednesday at 10:45, I think it is, in the Author HQ, and then taking questions afterwards. I'll be around to speak to people individually if they want to, for as long as there are people to ask me questions afterwards.

You are going to be there with John, the 3rd of the 3 Stooges, to talk to people who might be interested in talking to us, and I think you're going to be taking a recorder down as well.

James: We're going to do a bit of podcast recording whilst we're there and a little bit of video stuff as well. We might drop some of that into our Facebook page. We'd love to say hello; we'd love you to come and say hello to us, so if you are planning to go to the London Book Fair, drop us a note. Drop us an email at support@selfpublishingformula.com or drop a note into Facebook or, simply, walk up, tap us on the shoulder, and use the secret password, which is what? I've forgotten what the secret password is, Mark.

Mark: Umm.

James: That's it: 'umm.' Look slightly hesitant and say, "Umm." That's how most people approach me anyway.

Mark: Yeah.

James: Seriously, we would love people to come and say hello; that would be really good. Also, we're going to get as much as we can that's useful out of LBF, the London Book Fair, as possible for the podcast and we'll do some stuff from the London Book Fair itself and then we'll put some stuff in the can as well, because obviously not everyone can get there. I know most of our listeners are in the States, but there is a lot of useful stuff that will come out of that and this podcast will be a good place to glean some of that in the weeks to come.

Mark: Absolutely.

James: Good, cool. Let's move on to today's interview: quite author-based, quite writing-based, but a little bit, also, about marketing. It's a great character; his name is **Russell Blake**. Many of you will have heard of him.

Mark and Russell actually did a joint promotion a few months back, so they've done a little bit of business together.

This was the first time that the two of you actually spoke, wasn't it?

Mark: It was, yes. Russell is fairly infamous within the community. He'll probably hate me for saying that, but he really knows what he's talking about. We got on the phone with him. He's down in Mexico, so it's partially tequila-fueled, possibly-

James: Yeah.

Mark: ... Maybe even on his side, as well. It was a really good chat, so I hope everyone gets as much out of this as we did when we spoke to him.

James: Russell Blake is the USA Today best-selling author of 30 books, no less. In fact, I bet it's going to be more ... We'll speak to him in a second ... Including the Jet series. He's featured in the Wall Street Journal, the Times, the Chicago Tribune and, notably, Russell is co-author of "The Eye of Heaven" and at least one other book that I've noticed with the legendary Clive Cussler. Russell writes under the moniker R.E. Blake in the Young Adult Contemporary Romance genres. He's also, from our point of view, a well-respected voice on the indie publishing circuit, with a blog that's always forthright and to the point. His opinions are always worth listening to.

Hey, we're delighted to have you along, Russell, all the way from Mexico.

Russell: Lovely to be here. Hello, gentlemen.

James: Lovely to be there in the sun, I would say.

Russell: Yes. If you hear mariachis and screaming in the background, that's just par for the course.

James: Russell, thanks so much indeed for joining us. You know the basic thing that's going on here: I'm setting out on the journey; Mark's advanced. I'm going to get in first with my question because you've been incredibly successful. You're a very good writer, very well-respected. I'm not just saying this because you're on my podcast. I'm also a bit blown away by the amount you've written; you're prolific.

I want to know what my focus should be so that I can get somewhere within the realm of you within, perhaps, 10 years, 5, 10 year. What should I be focusing on at this stage in my career?

Russell: I think you should plan on marrying rich. That's my first tip.

James: That ship's sailed.

Russell: Actually, if you do that, you don't really need to do anything else.

James: Yeah.

Russell: You can write your memoirs, hopefully. Truthfully, I think the thing you need to focus on as a first-time content-creator, as a first-time author, is really to master storytelling. You notice I don't really say 'craft,' which really involves structuring sentences and pacing things and word choice and vocabulary, but mainly just storytelling, because that's, at its essence, is what a book is. It's a story, so it sounds obvious, but it if you can deconstruct other people's work and become familiar with what works and what doesn't within your genre, you're going to be way ahead of the game because you'll understand how to tell a story in as well-paced and as compelling a manner as possible. I'd say focus on the storytelling and on deconstructing other people's work, the work of other people who you think do a particularly good job within your genre.

James: That's great advice and I think already, since I started thinking about writing and started writing, it's impossible to purely enjoy a book anymore. You read a book and-

Russell: No, and that's part of the occupational hazard. I imagine movie guys are the same way. If you're Quentin Tarantino, you probably can't sit down and watch a movie and just enjoy it, because you're constantly going, "What's he doing with his POV, what techniques are they using," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. How is he pacing the story, telling what's happening off-screen, what's happening on-screen? You get involved in all the technical aspects, but I think it's important to master the technical aspects so you understand what you're doing and then, basically, forget about all of them.

In other words, once you understand the foundation and the bones, the dynamics that go into telling a story in a good versus a clumsy way, forget all the technique and just tell a good story.

James: Okay, that sounds good.

Mark, I know you're a fan of Russell. In fact, the two of you have collaborated, haven't you, on some marketing ventures. I haven't made that up, have I? You've done that.

Mark: We did. Russell and I both, for about 2 or 3 months last year, we put together a Facebook ad that gave away the first book in the Jet series and the first book in my Milton series. I can't remember what the numbers were now, Russell. We added a few thousand to our list, didn't we?

Russell: It was very successful, thank you. I consider myself fortunate to have been able to work with you on that.

Mark: It was good for me too; it's just introducing our books to different audiences, so that was really great. One thing that James said, I thought was interesting, is looking at your creative process. I think we are probably

quite similar in the way that we look at things. When I started out, I had all these grand ambitions; I tried to write books that would win prizes and they were shit because I'm not that kind of writer.

Russell: Sure.

Mark: At the end of the day, the kind of decision I came down to was, I've got a mortgage to pay and I wanted to look after my family. I wanted to write books. Beyond that, actually ... I wanted to write books that people read and enjoyed, page-turners. That's something you are an absolute master at writing: page-turning fiction. None of us is going to win the Pulitzer, but we're probably going to sell quite a lot of books.

Russell: Speak for yourself. I'm hoping that ... I'm waiting for the call.

Thank you; that's very generous praise, kind words. I've read some of your stuff and you are a masterful storyteller yourself.

By the way, there's no charge for the lotion job, guys. That's perfectly acceptable within the context.

James: Let's move on. Storytelling is fantastic and I think that the sales that you've made and the friends that you've made, frankly, people like Clive Cussler, kind of speak for the fact. Every writer's full of insecurities, right? Nobody's sits there thinking, "I've got it cracked," and I'm not going to say you've got it cracked, but you are somebody who understands a story and is working on that and turning it into something profitable, which moves me on to the marketing side of things.

Can we tap your experience on the marketing side? What's your advice for somebody starting out and what's your advice for somebody who's already down the road in the way that you and Mark are?

Russell: As a beginning author ... It took me a while to figure this out. I think you have to really view the business of publishing your work as a completely separate endeavor than creating content, which is the writing of the book, because, frankly, the skill set that makes you a good writer doesn't have, really, anything to do with operating a successful publishing company, which is where you're marketing the books, you're packaging

them, you're editing them, you're making decisions on what product is the best fit for a genre.

And this is an interactive process that's taken probably a few years to be able to synthesize and articulate clearly, assuming I am articulating it clearly. I view it as content creation, which is writing books and telling good stories, and publishing, which is packaging those stories and marketing them and communicating to an audience that you have a product that is both worth paying for and that they will be interested in if they knew it existed.

I think, as a beginning author certainly, understanding that those are two separate disciplines and the skill sets don't necessarily translate across, and that you're signing up to be good at both of them, means that you have to split your time. You have to commit to the discipline of putting in x amount of time on the publishing/ marketing side and x amount of time on the content creation side.

I hear a lot of beginning authors, certainly, saying, "You know, I'm not comfortable with the self-promotion. I'm not comfortable with the marketing side; I'm not good at that." It's like, "Well, sweetie, that's what you signed up for." You're trying to operate a publishing company, so if you just want to be a purely content creator, and not be in the publishing business, which is essentially a retail game, then go ahead and just write good books, shop for an agent, hope lightning strikes and best of luck to you. If you're going to try to do both and self-publish, just recognize that you are signing up to, not only the content creation side of it, but the retail marketing side of it.

I think that's where a lot of authors stumble, because they're uncomfortable with that idea. They view it as sort of crass and commercial and it's like, "But it's a retail marketing business; of course it's crass and commercial." Mark: I've seen that hundreds of times with new authors. I remember once, I was on a panel and someone asked me from the floor how much time I spent on marketing and how much time I spent on writing. It's probably about 50/50 for me. You can probably suggest what your split is like in a minute. When I said that it was 50/50, the answer was, "Well, then you're not a real author; you're not a full-time author?" Yeah, I could have

banged my head against a wall when you get that kind of answer. That's fine; they can think that if they want, but I was tempted to say that if you have that mindset, the odds of you making a career out of writing are very, very slim, you know.

Russell: It's a failure to grasp the duality, the fundamentals of the business. Content creation is writing books, thinking up great stories, mastering the storytelling, the pacing all of that stuff, all the good stuff, all the craft, all the artistic and the fun part.

Operating a publishing business, which is what happens when you ask people to buy your content that you just created, that's a different business. That's why I say, if people were clear on that up front, they wouldn't make statements like, "Oh, well then you're not really an author," or "Okay, you failed to" ... What he should have said, if he wanted to be accurate, was, "Well, then you're not a full-time content creator."

Mark: Mm-hmm.

Russell: That would be true; you aren't.

Mark: No, exactly.

Russell: You are an author who also operates a publishing company to sell the content you created.

Mark: It's a bit of an extreme example, but ... I write in the morning, so when I'm writing in the morning, I'm creating stories and telling stories and tales and things. When I change hats and start going into marketing mode, those stories become, effectively, story keeping units. They're widgets to sell.

Russell: Yeah.

Mark: That sounds terribly unromantic, but that's the truth of it.

Russell: Business is, by definition, terribly unromantic. I mean, it really is; it's packaging and selling of a product.

Mark: Yeah.

James: Let me bust in for somebody who's sold on the idea, they're not pretentious about it; they're sold on the idea that they can spend 3 or 4 hours in the morning writing and then operate themselves as a business in the afternoon, but they're under-confident about that.

They dream this dream about being a good writer, they're working hard at their craft and storytelling, et cetera, and then they look slightly aghast at a world they don't really understand. What do you say to them about that?

Russell: I'd say that part of what you're signing up to is educating yourself about the business aspects of running a retail marketing company, so you have to be very clear that you signed up for both jobs. In other words, just doing one job, that's fine; then, you're a content creator, but don't have any expectation that you're going to be able to market and sell your work. Why would you be able to? Did you pick that up by osmosis? A divine right? Nobody would say, "I should be running Microsoft," just by proclaiming themselves to be breathing. They would grasp that that has a skill set involved and that you would have to take it upon yourself to educate yourself about that skill set so that you're effective at it.

You know, I always use the example of Yo Yo Ma: nobody sits down, picks up a cello and says, "I should be playing in Carnegie Hall as a cellist." They recognize it's going to take 10, 20 years of very hard work and committed practice and, even then, they probably won't play at Carnegie Hall.

That's why I go back to: you have to be very clear that self-publishing is not just content creation; it is the business aspect of operating a publishing company in a retail marketing environment.

Mark: The clue is kind of in the name isn't it? The publishing bit of the self-publishing.

James: Yeah, the self bit.

Russell: Authors don't hear that. They love the Cinderella story where, "Yeah, no, I just wrote the book and then I put it up and it sold 6 million copies and now the Olsen twins are coming over and I've got big book that's great," you know? It's like, yes, we all enjoy that fairy tale, but reality is ... I know a lot of authors; I'm sure you do too, Mark ... They all work very, very hard at both the content creation art and the business aspect.

Mark: Yeah, and those lightning strikes ... Hugh Howey is often put forward as a lightning strike, which conveniently forgets the fact that he had about 10 books behind him before "Wool" got big.

Russell: Of course. He's a very, very good storyteller and author; I've read his stuff. I have tremendous respect for the man, so, yeah, it wasn't,

"Whoops, how did that happen?" There was definitely some craft and being in the right place at the right time and having the right story at the right time and all that confluence of events.

I've said in many other podcasts, every success story I know of is an exception. This is a business of exceptions. I would say, if authors recognize that it is the exception rather than the rule to succeed in earning any kind of a living at generating content and then selling it, that would naturally lead them into the question, "Well, what's going to make me exceptional? How am I going to be another exception?"

You can either wait for it to happen, for the universe to recognize your brilliance, or you can take steps that will make you an exception. For me, I looked at this very clinically when I looked at the business; I kind of went, "The thing that I can do is write fairly well and I can generate a lot of content in a short period of time."

My edge, if you will, my exception, was that I could create a tremendous back list of competently crafted ... And some would argue that ...

Competently crafted thrillers and action thrillers and mysteries and get them out there so I'd have a back list of somebody who's been writing 20 years and have it within 18 months.

I recognized that; I was very calculated. I was like, "This is one of those exceptional things that I can do." It's not because I'm particularly fortunate or unfortunate any more than someone who's double-jointed and can do that odd thing with their thumbs where it sort of bends backwards. Some people just can do that, in which case, they could probably be good card sharks or whatever, pick pockets, and others aren't. If you can't churn out a lot of product quickly and do so at a relatively high degree of quality, that's not going to be how you're the exception.

Mark: I remember when I first started getting into this, probably 4 or 5 years ago, when you were still more active on KBoards. I remember reading some of your posts, reading some of your books, looking at your back list, and being kind of struck dumb by how fast you wrote. At that stage, I was still writing maybe a couple of books a year-

Russell: Sure.

Mark: Which is .. It's fast for most people, but I knew it wasn't fast enough. Then, in 2014, I found something that enabled me to write, maybe 4 or 5 novels in 2014 and that was the tipping point.

I just wonder: do you have any idea what that is? For me, it would be, like, the confluence of starting to get readers, starting to make money and finding a series that I loved to write. Those combined so that I could write nearly 1 million words in 2014.

What do you see, from your perspective?

Russell: I think it's all about self-motivation. You can either have your motivation external or internal and, don't get me wrong, greed and desperation are wonderful drivers; cornered rats tend to fight a lot harder than those with options. By the same token, also, I'm a big believer in the questions that you ask yourself tend to get different answers.

If the question you're asking yourself is, "How can I write 6 novels this year and have a blast doing it?," you're going to get a completely different answer than, "How in the name of God am I ever going to write 6 novels?" I'm aware of the power that questions have, and my motivation levels and my beliefs about what's possible and isn't, so I try to structure, I try to craft questions that get a better outcome. I talk to people that have writers' block all the time, "Oh, I'm just not motivated," and it's like, "Again, sweetie, if you were working for Pixar or Lucasfilms or something, nobody would really, particularly, be that interested in whether life got in the way, or how you feel today; your job is to create content to a certain quality level in a certain period of time."

That's the job; if you don't want it, somebody else will be more than happy to take it. That's the job.

James: They're very easy persuade that they want to get better at storytelling; they're all ears when it comes to how you use Scrivener or whatever, and divide the chapters up. Those same people may be the ones saying, "I don't really have time to understand Facebook".

Like you say, Russell, and you say it very well, it's your job, so put the same amount of professional approach to understanding social media advertising or mailing lists or whatever, that you do structuring your chapters.

Russell: I think the old adage is that there's only one right way to write a novel, but nobody can agree on what it is. There's some truth to that, and people work in different ways and, I think different genres. Different approaches work better in different genres. I've synthesized my approach to one where I outline now; I don't pants. I outline in a fairly brief manner and then I write to the outline; I leave myself enough wiggle room to change the story around and add or subtract things that I find interesting or uninteresting.

I try to write the outline and not because I fancy myself to be an automaton, it's just because it cuts down on the content creation time by a factor of 3.

James: Differently from almost everyone else that we've spoken to so far, I don't think you use Scrivener do you?

Russell: No, I don't use it. I just have an Excel spreadsheet that I have up on my website to show people how I organize my thoughts and I write in Microsoft Word.

Scrivener, all of these things are just ways, constructs to, basically, frame your perspective. They're just ways of organizing your thinking, but you don't require a program to organize your thinking. You can do the same thing long hand with some index cards.

James: Strangely, people managed to write books even before computers were around, didn't they?

Russell: I've heard that.

James: Yeah, with chapters and everything.

Russell: The power of perception. A lot of people are like, "Oh, ever since I found x, y, x software, I've really improved my productivity and blah, blah, blah, blah," and it's kind of like, "Okay, well again, that makes my point." It's the power of perception. Your perception is that this tool is focusing your thinking and organizing you, so you, now, are more productive, great. You could do that with anything.

Mark: Yeah, it's the placebo effect, isn't it? At the moment - I don't know if you've heard about this - there's a piece of software, or a website, called Brain FM that's supposed to produce structured white noise, I suppose I'd call it. It's quite musical; it's supposed to stimulate your brain waves. For me, that's almost certainly marketing BS, but-

Russell: It sure sounds like it.

Mark: Saying that, I've actually tried it and my productivity went up by a significant amount.

James: He's now a Scientologist.

Russell: Okay, sure.

James: I'm auditing you both right now.

Mark: I've joined a cult.

Russell: You know, you've only got so many hours on the planet, so you might as well enjoy yourself.

Mark: Give it a go.

Russell: Unless you're a Scientologist, in which case-

Mark: You've got a spaceship to get to.

Russell: Don't get me started.

James: The point, to be fair to Mark, you're making, is it is quite possibly just the placebo effect; someone tells you that's going to help you and that's sometimes what you need, isn't it, to think you're being helped and it helps you. I'm sure doctors do this from time to time, with the placebos, not just a made up thing, is it, in health.

You talk about doing the best you can to put yourself in a position to have an exceptional success, Russell. I know that you've got a few tricks of the trade; some of them are what we would now consider quite traditional tricks, a bit of a trailblazer in its day, but I can see you still use the perma free. I'm just looking at your Amazon page now and I see that "The Night of the Assassin," which seems to be the prequel to the Assassin series, a free "Ops Files Jet," I guess is towards the beginning of your Jet series, is free at the moment on Kindle.

Is that a permanent thing for you and is that something you still stand by as being a stock in trade for self-publishing authors?

Russell: I'm a huge fan of perma free on the first book in your series. Obviously, there's some nuance to that, but I like perma free; I think it gives readers an opportunity to evaluate their work and see whether you're worth their time or not.

I view it exactly the same as handing out brownies at Costco. It's like, first time's for free; go ahead and taste it, see if you like it, but the idea is that, if

the content that you're creating is worth paying for, you'll attract a certain number of readers that say, "I would like more of that brownie, and I'm willing to pay for another bite of the brownie." That's the idea; it's just retail marketing.

Mark: I've just re-watched some early episodes of "The Wire" again and I think what we do with perma free is quite similar to handing out free baggies of whatever it is that's stimulating the customers. It's get them hooked and then you sell them the hard stuff.

Russell: Sure.

Mark: That's always been what I've done.

Russell: I think that it's actually one of the things that indies, really, have leveraged and that's been rather smart. One of their advantages over traditional, published authors is that they were able to use that first time's for free approach and get discovery in an increasingly difficult to gain discovery world.

It's all about visibility. Assuming you have 10 guys, all of whom can write at the same level, meaning that, it's like that line at the fair: you have to be this tall to get onto the ride. Assuming everyone's that tall and can master their craft to the point where they're qualified to get on the ride, one of those, or two of those is going to excel while the other eight don't. Generally speaking, it's because more people have heard of that one person than the other eight or nine and that's where the retail marketing comes in. It's about gaining visibility and a time-honored tradition in retail marketing is placement, obviously, but also first time's for free. Give away free samples.

Mark: You can fill in the audience here a bit, but you didn't come to traditional publishing; it wasn't your first gig, was it? You've got quite a lot of experience before you've made a success with this business.

Russell: I've owned businesses, I've worked for companies, I've done a few things. The disciplines never change; really, you're trying to communicate to people that you have a solution to their problem. If their problem is, for instance, they're bored and they want entertainment or stimulation, a possible solution to that is, "I have the book you want to read." You're trying to solve the same problem, whether you're selling construction

equipment or building homes or import/ export, the fundamentals never change.

I think, probably, the best thing most beginning authors could do is just go get a Marketing 101 textbook. Any old Marketing 101 textbook; go spend 10 cents on it at the used bookstore and just read it, cover to cover.

James: How much do you have the customer in mind when you come up with your books?

Russell: A reasonable amount, but I am the customer for my books, so I basically find it very easy to imagine my audience because I'm the audience for the types of books I write.

I've learned that I have to censor myself somewhat, because what I enjoy reading might be a little grittier than an 80-year-old cat lady in a trailer in Alabama, so I have to be sensitive to the idea that dismemberment and graphic violence, et cetera, et cetera, may turn off some people.

On the flip side of it, I love Tom Harris, I love "Silence of the Lambs," that sort of thing. A lot of people don't. They're like, "Ew, I don't know about that; it's a little too 'ooh' it's cringe-worthy."

I just write to my personal taste and soften it just a little bit; that's what I do.

James: You could write some harder stuff and you don't do that because you don't think the market's as big for that?

Russell: I could go full-blown "American Psycho" with no problem whatsoever, but I think the audience for it is smaller.

James: Okay.

Mark: Yeah.

Russell: It might be even more interesting if I did that, but the problem is, I put on my marketer hat and I go, "That product is going to be much harder to sell."

Mark: It's a case of marketer Russell speaking to writer Russell and pulling rank.

Russell: No, I have an agent; Clive's agent Peter is my agent now and he's a very thoughtful, erudite man who's been in the business forever. One of the nice things about having a good agent is that they don't bullshit you. They tell you, "Nah, that'll never fly," or "Bad idea," so if you just pretend that

you're an agent evaluating someone else's work when you look at a concept, that makes it a lot easier. It takes all the personal sting out of it. It's just like, "Nah, I'm not going to spend the next 3 months trying to sell that; it'll never work."

James: Everyone needs an Ari Gold, don't they? The agent in "Entourage" who says, "That's bullshit; it's not going to work," and walks out of the office.

Russell: It saves you a lot of time.

James: Yeah, it does. Yeah, very valuable. Let's move into a little bit more of the marketing side.

I noticed you are part of the Kindle Unlimited program. Is that something you thought about doing; has it worked out for you?

Russell: I've got, I want to say, 25% of my books, 20% of my books are in Kindle Unlimited. I'm conflicted on that one. I see the value and the reason that I've got a certain number of my books is in there is simply so that I don't miss a potential audience. But on the flip side of it, not a big fan of exclusivity to any one channel and, frankly, if I had 5 books out instead of approaching 50, I probably wouldn't be in the program, depending on which genre I was in.

Different genres perform completely differently in Kindle Unlimited. Sci-Fi does magnificently in Kindle Unlimited; Post-Ap does very, very well. Certain types of Romance; it really seems like that's a 9 to 1 ratio of borrowers to buyers. It depends on the genre.

Mark: I've got a couple of books in K.U., but I agree with you. I'm uncomfortable with the idea of exclusivity over my entire catalog.

Russell: No, and I don't see the financial benefit. I see 35, 38% of my total income coming from non-Amazon sales. It would have to be a hell of a program to compensate me enough to want to be exclusive.

Mark: Talking about going wide, how have you approached the other platforms, because they're very different from how to do things on Amazon?

Russell: Actually, permafrees work way better on Barnes and Noble and on Apple than it does on Amazon, nowadays. I'm very guilty of completely ignoring Apple and Barnes and Noble in terms of anything channel specific

and yet, my sales have been very, very good. It's in spite of anything that I've done rather than because of it that I'm seeing sales there.

In fact, I don't know ... Maybe you do, Mark; you're the marketing guy.

Really, you're kind of marketing guru guy, do you do anything differently to hook Apple clients or customers?

Mark: You're right on perma free; it's much more powerful on Apple right now. I just did my numbers for February, and the numbers on the giveaway that I have, the Milton starter book, 7 or 8 times better on Apple than they are on Amazon. There's that, which is obviously a big thing.

In terms of getting noticed on those platforms, in my experience, it's more about relationship-building than algorithm-tickling, if you like.

Russell: Yeah.

Mark: Meeting people at trade fairs and being tenacious but not irritating, so asking to be put in to promotions and things like that. Once you've done that and it's been successful, then they'll come back again.

Russell: It's interesting; I've never done a book fair, I've never done a trade show, I've never done any of that. I've never met anyone. I'm busy writing, so I never thought of doing it. There's a lot of different ways you can achieve the same result.

Mark: You're spending enough advertising, even if most of my Facebook ads are directed towards Amazon, people I think are on Amazon. If you spend enough, there's a big spillover. I have noticed big spikes in the other platforms on boxed sets and things that can only really be attributed to the ads that I'm running. A question of general visibility.

Russell: One of the things I've noticed, though, on Apple, which is odd. It's probably a demographic, a sort of, "Hm, that's interesting," is that Apple customers tend to be less price-sensitive.

Mark: Yep. Absolutely.

Russell: Tend to be willing to pay more; they don't have a problem paying \$7 for an eBook.

Mark: Yeah, a really good example of that is, Kobo is even better than that. The difference with Kobo and Apple, actually; there's no \$9.99 limit, where there 70% royalty stops applying, so I've put together all of the books in my Milton series, so, at the moment, 8 novels and 2 novellas, and sell them for

25 bucks on Kobo and Apple. That's doing really, really well. The return on investment for ads there is ridiculous.

Russell: I really need to focus on doing stuff like that, because I really don't and I'm probably could increase my sales by 10-20% by just doing that. The problem is, there's only so many hours in the day.

Mark: Yeah, tell me about it.

Russell: I know; I wish I could clone myself or, better yet, clone you.

Mark: One thing I really wanted to ask you about: is Kindle Worlds. For the listeners who don't know what Kindle Worlds is; it's a program that Amazon introduced that allowed other writers to write within established fictional worlds.

With you, obviously, Russell, it was the Jet series, became available. There are lots of books that have been published in that series.

I just wondered if you'd talk about that for a little bit, because it's not something that is available to writers outside of the US, so I don't have any experience of it at all.

Russell: It's fan fiction, that's what it is. It's fan fiction; it's where other authors, whether amateur or professional, can create stories, usually novellas, in a world like the Jet world, using my character Jet and any of the other characters I've created and creating their own characters and coming up with novel takes on the character. It can be anything; it can be Jet the romance, you know, Jet the steam-punk version. There's no limitations. The idea is that it's a fun way to get readers to try their hand at writing and to allow other authors, who perhaps don't have as much exposure and aren't as established, to be able to hone their chops and develop an audience using your world as the backdrop.

I can think of two immediate examples that have done pretty well out of it. One is Jason Gurley, who is a friend of mine who got a massive deal, I believe with Crown, for his book "Eleanor." He did covers for me for a while. He's also a great guy. He started writing in Hugh's world, in his Kindle World.

Another one is Tom Abrams, who has had a remarkable run in the last 4 months in the post-apocalyptic genre and who started really writing in that

genre because he wrote in Steven Konkoly's "Perseid Collapse" world, which I also wrote one in.

In both cases, that worked well for them. It's possible to use Kindle Worlds as a platform to jump off and jump-start your own literary career.

Mark: From the perspective of the creator ... you, in this case ... I tried to do something similar to that. I reached out to a couple of writers whose books I really enjoyed and said, "Would you like" ... They're not as well-known yet, although I think they'll do very well for themselves ... I said, "Would you like to write a book in my Milton world?" They both started to write it and they sent me the first couple of chapters for my thoughts and I just could not go through with it. I think you'll probably tell me to get over myself, which is completely reasonable.

Russell: No, my solution is that I just don't read ... I don't have any editorial say in any of the books that are generated in the Jet world.

Mark: Have you read any of them?

Russell: I've read, I want to say, 3 or 4 of them.

Mark: Yeah.

Russell: There's something like 30 of them so-

Mark: Were you able to disengage yourself as the creator of that character and that world and approach it in a non-emotional reading way?

Russell: No, I'm terrible at that. It's also the reason why I can't listen to my own audio books. I just can't do it. I can't; I should be able to say, "Oh, yes I can." Nah. It'd be a lie. Actually, the only audio book I've been able to listen to, the only take on mine, is the Black series, because the narrator just nailed it. On the other ones, they do brilliant jobs; Dick Hill, who does the Assassin series, is a marvelous narrator, very, very much in demand. He's a masterful actor, et cetera, et cetera, but the problem, for me, is just the cadence. Craft pros ... There's a certain musicality that you hear and your head and I don't think that ... It's an intensely personal cadence that you shoot for and that's your voice, in a way.

To disengage to the point where you aren't being judgmental with your voice, you know, "How true is this?" You're used to reading about that character with your voice. Now, you've got somebody ... Jet rescues baby seals in the Arctic. Well, okay, sure. Then, somebody else whose approach,

whose voice is completely different, it's hard as a content creator, to stomach it. On the same point, you're also capable of being surprised. I won't mention, because I don't like playing favorites, but I read one take on it that I was kind of like, "Wow, that's ... I would have never gone that direction." It was a positive surprise.

James: You're not worried about the ... Some people might get a bit of pressure about the brand. You talked, just now, about not being too gritty with some of the series, and yet somebody could take the Jet character and inject all sorts of very gritty, who knows, sexual, violent, whatever things into the book.

Russell: Yeah, I'd read that. You're singing my song.

James: I'm going to have a go; that's what I'm going to do, a Jet series.

Russell: There we go; I think we just inked a deal.

James: What she does with the baby seals you don't want to know.

Let's get on to a couple of questions, because believe it or not, we had a lot of questions in from students and followers in the Facebook group who want to ping some things at you. One of them and I wasn't aware, I have to say, that you had one of these before I saw the question.

A listener wants to know how you're getting on with your treadmill desk.

Russell: It's been a lifesaver. I'm 25 pounds lighter than I was when I started writing. I write probably a couple hours a day walking on the treadmill desk and I stand at it probably 6 hours a day. I would absolutely, unconditionally recommend it to anyone that's thinking about being a writer.

The blood flows, you know, you're oxygenated. The biggest killer is really that your body wasn't meant to be sedentary for 10, 12 hours a day; it just wasn't, so things don't work well. Nothing works; your brain doesn't work, nothing works well, if you're sedentary. Plus, you don't live as long. If you can walk at a moderate pace, and I walk at around 2 miles per hour, so I'm not really a race horse, but the point is, if I walked for 2 hours, I just clocked 4 miles and I've probably written 2,000 words, so hey, win-win.

Mark: That's pretty good.

Russell: I would absolutely recommend it. It took me maybe a day and a half to get used to it and now it's second nature.

James: This question is a follow-up.

Zariana asks, "Have you ever thought about writing a best seller entitled 'How to keep fit, become an icon and make a million?'" It's just a thought of hers.

Russell: I would ... Perhaps how to abuse yourself, become notorious and .. I've already told you how to wind up with a million: marry well. That's it.

James: That was the opening gambit, okay.

We've asked a couple of the questions that Karen O'Connor wanted to ask about writing to Mark, et al, writing what you love, and I think you've answered that by saying you basically write what you love but you temper it.

Perhaps 25% of the process is tempering for the market.

Russell: I would agree with that. Look, if you don't have a passion for what you're doing, why are you doing it? I'd just start there. It's like, look, the chances of you making a living writing are very, very slim. People hate it when I say it, "Oh, you're not ... You're such a drag; it's not inspiring." It's like, "Well, my job isn't to be inspiring; my job is to tell you the truth." It is the exception, not the rule, that makes more than beer money being a writer. That's just the way it is and if you need some false reality where that's not the case, I'm the wrong guy to talk to about it. There's lots of people who will sell you seminars and books about how wonderful it is and how you're going to ... "You can do it if you can dream it," but reality tends to be a little harsher and even a cursory understanding of the figures tells you that the odds are stacked against you.

Just accept that, understand it. You can't change it. That's just how it is. If you're going to do it, it better be because you have some real passion for what you're going to do. It's likely that you're going to be about the only person that ever reads it. I mean, so might as well write something that you think is the best book you ever read. You see the logic to it?

If it is the best book that you've ever read of its type, there's a chance that other people might think the same thing.

Mark: I agree with that. Between my traditional deals and then writing self-published stuff, I tried to write books that I thought the market wanted and they weren't the books that I wanted to write and I've never had a situation where I've had to force myself to open the laptop to start writing. Normally,

these days, I get itchy if I don't write at least a little a day. Back then, it was like pulling teeth; I hated it. I'll never do that again.

Russell: Yeah, no, trust me; I've been in that situation. I think, certainly, a few of the books that I've written over the last 4 years ... 4 1/2 now ... 4 1/2 years, you know, a few came very hard to the page and others just flowed beautifully. The point being that the ones that didn't flow beautifully onto the page came after this became a money making endeavor.

Mark: Yeah.

Russell: Whether that's good or bad, I don't know, but I think every author hits that point in their professional life if they're making a living doing it where they feel the pressure of, "Can I write something again that people want to buy?," and that encounters their creative side. Their content creator is kind of like, "But I want to write x, not more of that," so I don't know. This post-apocalyptic thing that I'm doing, I can't tell you how excited I am about it and I'm cranking 7500 words a day right now.

Mark: I love post-apocalyptic as well. It's another thing I'd love to do.

Russell: Yeah, it kind of opens up the joy of creating, the series of cascading likelihood scenarios and the road warrior future and all of that. You know, it's a lot of fun, so I'm waking up early just to get to it.

Mark: That's the best sign. When you're in that kind of flow.

Russell: Yeah. There's been more than a few that I've just been, "Oh, God," you know, anything I can find to not have to get to this right now, I'll do it. "I have to balance my checkbook."

Mark: When that book is finished, or when the series is finished, how will you approach the marketing? You've got a mailing list now ... We've partly built ... We've had some together and you've been building for ages yourself.

How will you market a post-apocalyptic series to readers of Jet, for example?

Russell: First of all, I think that people that like Jet are going to love the post-apocalyptic. There's a lot of Jet in it. There's just a lot of that sort of pacing and action, but there's also a lot of ... There's a lot more texture to it. To go to the, "How do I intend to market it?," my mailing list is now over 20,000 people, so fine, I'll send out a mailing to them.

I plan to release the books April, May and June, so I'm going to release, bam, bam, bam; 1, 2 and 3, 30 days apart, presuming my editor doesn't quit and my proofreader ... And I write them. I also am going to enlist some of my friends that are in the same genre to read the books and, if they like them, you know, give me blurbs and announce to their readership, said, "Hey, this may be something that you like because I liked it and you may like it." I think it's just, kind of, word of mouth and I'm confident enough in the content that, between 20,000 or 22 or whatever it is I've got and my friends putting out the word and Facebook and Twitter, although I don't do very much Twitter anymore, and my blog, you know. I should be able to communicate effectively to the world that this is available and you may want to give it a try.

I'm probably going to price it just insanely cheap. The first book, I'm probably going to go out \$2.99 or \$3.99, which, for me, my Rameses series ... Yeah, I'm going out at \$6.99 and selling briskly; I have no complaints about it. Jet ... I think when I do a new release of pretty much anything, it's going to be \$5.95 or \$5.99, so to go out at \$2.99 or \$3.99 is a marked change in my strategy, but again, post-apocalyptic is a different audience. I'll probably go exclusive; I'll probably go into Kindle Unlimited on that, because when I look at where the buying patterns are for that audience, it's Amazon.

Mark: I think I would, at least for the first 3 months, establish a base on Amazon, use K.U. and then see how it is in 3 months time, maybe go wide, maybe 6 months go wide.

Russell: Yeah, but I mean, I reserve the right to do that at all times. I think go cheap and go narrow on the first one and see how that works. Then, I've got 30 days for the second one; I can either take that one wide and take my lumps for 60 days while I'm not seeing any sales on the other platforms, or I can wait for ... Go specific with that to Kindle as well, to K.U. I don't know; it's interesting, because it'll be an interesting experiment for me to go into a completely different genre and see how well it translates.

Mark: I think you'll be fantastic. I read your Facebook updates and they're always really interesting and provocative, so perhaps I can see a political angle that might be coming into this series.

Russell: Oh yeah. There's definitely some room for getting up on the soapbox, but I think you also have to temper your natural enthusiasm to do that or you lose the audience, because at the end of the day, they want the story.

Although one of the things that's fun about it is it does give you a little more room to play with the philosophy of the entire thing. If the world's come crashing down around you, there's some deeply philosophical questions that people are going to be asking themselves in terms of, "What does this all mean? How do we progress from here? What have we learned, if anything? Are the atrocities that we're seeing every day just ingrained in human nature? Are we really such dark beasts that this is the best we can do?," et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

There's plentiful data to mine there and I find it more substantive and more interesting to me than, maybe, something like Rameses that's more, "There's the treasure; let's go find it."

James: I'll tell you what's interesting about it. Obviously, we're sitting here in Europe and we're a few hundred miles away from people who are, effectively, living in a post-apocalyptic landscape and trying to escape from it.

Russell: Yeah, and it's interesting you say that, because I was thinking about that. I actually wrote some pages yesterday where I address that and sort of went ... You know, for Americans, this is ... America has this reality that it's carefully crafted that the world is a relatively safe place and yet, if you live in Syria or Iraq or a lot of other places in the world, it's not. I would maintain the world's never been a safe place. When the Mongol hordes were sweeping across Asia, or the Byzantine empire or the barbarians were taking over Europe, it's never been a safe place.

It's just fascinating to me that, when you've got a culture whose thesis is that we're morally superior and superior, just in terms of this form of government we have, et cetera, et cetera and a by-product of that will be we're safe. When all that collapses, it becomes very obvious, in this world that I've created, that this world's always been a dangerous place. This is artificial. The reality is, it is dangerous.

Yes, you're in the UK and if you're in the South of France in Provence right now, sipping wine, it probably doesn't seem that dangerous, but if you're breathing depleted uranium dust that's blown by the Sirocco winds north, yeah, it is more dangerous; you just don't realize it.

James: I think that's a really interesting areas, probably one of the reasons why post-apocalyptic is ... In the same way that it dominated Japanese culture for 20 years, 30 years, even into the 70s.

It's starting to feature, isn't it, in certainly video games, a lot of fallout, things like that, a lot of post-apocalyptic scenes.

Russell: I think that's a reliable indicator that things are breaking down, or that the anxiety level is increasing over reality. In other words, when you have this cognitive dissonance that maybe reality isn't what the mainstream media or what the educational system is telling me it is and maybe it's something far more ominous and dangerous. I think that a release valve for that is reading fiction that explores that darker possibility, if that makes any sort of sense.

It's more cathartic. You're more interested in it because your thoughts are more naturally gravitating in that direction.

James: Yeah, really interesting.

I really want to get a couple more of the questions in before we go. I'm acutely aware that we're taking a lot of your time so far this evening.

Doug has posted a couple of questions. One of those, he says, "NDAs apart, are there any lessons you can share from working so closely with Clive Cussler?"

Russell: I think one of the things I learned and became acutely aware of and much better at is pacing. In other words, cut the bullshit. In other words, don't overwrite and cut the parts of the book that aren't essential to the story. I've become much more laser-focused since working with Clive; I've done 2 books with him. I did "The Eye of Heaven" and I did "The Solomon Curse." I have to say that, in terms of my personal approach to my books, I've seen an evolution in terms of pacing and in terms of my approach to story.

Now, when I outline, I am ruthless. I wrote a blog about it; I don't remember, maybe 2 weeks ago, maybe a month ago, that talks about the

secret to writing a page-turner. That's one of the takeaways that I got from working with Clive was every chapter has to do its work. It's got to do heavy lifting. It's got to have a surprise, it's got to have a twist, it's got to have reversals, it's got to have, if possible, an action beat. It's got to create a series of burning questions that the reader absolutely must know the answer to and compels them to turn the page.

All of that, I got out of having to think through story better from working with Clive. I would have paid to do that.

James: Yeah, and you got paid.

Russell: Right, so ... win-win.

James: Obviously, I'm at the beginning end, but this is something that occupies me a lot and I'm sure people who are setting out in writing: it's not quite as crude as saying how much do I write, but I did a little experiment with one of my chapters. There's a very specific thing I know the guy, my character, needs to do and I wrote it as frugally as possible and it came out at about 4,000 words. This chapter really, really was short: he went in, got the thing done. I'm now thinking about it, it's a couple of days later, and I actually thought today why I needed to take more time to get him in there. It wasn't the story pushing that along, the narrative; it was people understanding his experience of what happened. Although I am now going to go back and make it longer and fluff it out, I think it still fits in with what you're saying. The reason I'm writing that is because people need to understand how he was feeling and how he got to where he was in his mind before the thing happened. It's still being focused.

I wrestle with this quite a lot: how much you write, basically. I enjoy reading the description, you know? I read Mark's books and yours. There's little bits of detail that tell you the bigger story. That might feel a bit like fluff at the time, but I guess that's when you are writing purposefully, even if it doesn't necessarily drive the story in that sentence. Does that make sense?

Russell: I think it's a balancing act, though. I think that, certainly, for the type of writers I read, that I admire ... James Lee Burke is a perfect example.

James: Great writer.

Russell: His knowledge of craft is amazing. His descriptive capability, his word choice, the man is a master. I aspire to that, but I recognize I don't

have the level of talent of the 60 years of writing experience he has. I think that, just because you are trying to structure your story so that it requires the reader to turn the page to find out what happens next, doesn't mean that it has to be 6-word sentences and, "The cat saw the rat." It doesn't have to be "The Hardy Boys"; you can introduce lyricism in there and there's a place for it, to put the reader into a sense of place, what it smells like, what the protagonist is feeling. All of that sensory nuance, you can also include, but, man oh man, it better move the story forward.

Mark: I think less is more. My favorite part of the edit is when I cut things out, because I know that every word I'm taking away is tightening the novel. Making it quicker flow, and also, you just have to trust the reader. If you look at a film like, "Reservoir Dogs," the ear-slicing scene. Everyone remembers that as being particularly graphic and gory, but the truth is, you don't see it. You don't see anything; it's all in your mind.

Russell: Yeah, Hitchcock was great at that.

Mark: Yeah, absolutely.

Russell: He really was and, yeah, there's some of that. You know, it's difficult; again, it comes down to voice and it also comes down to the story you're trying to tell, personal style. I tend to, as a reader, I tend to try to write like the people I admire and I don't necessarily admire commercial success as much as I do grasp of craft. In other words, if I had a choice between selling a million books or 250,000 books and one could be written in a more lyrical way that would have my peers going, "This is amazing," versus something that would be, perhaps, more commercially successful but more pedestrian and sophomoric, I think I would err to the side of the 250,000 seller. I just would; that's just my nature.

I don't know, maybe that's why I'll never be James Patterson. That's fine; I don't need to be. I'm very happy that the world's been receptive to the stuff I've written. I mean, really, I can't complain.

James: You're doing okay.

Mark: You can buy a hell of a lot of tequila with 250,000 books sold.

Russell: I can. You know, the Post-Ap thing could go that direction. I mean, really, it's probably one of the few things that I've written that really has the possibility of doing that, although the Jets sold more than that. I remember,

I had this feeling when I was writing Jet, I was like, "Man, this is either going to bomb or it's great. It's going to be one or the other. It's not going to be in between."

I have that feeling right now as I right this one. It's called "The Day After Never," and the first book is called "Blood Honor," and I've just got that feeling. It's got that tingly feeling when you're like, "Shit, this might actually be good."

Mark: I look forward to reading it, really.

James: I am as well.

Russell, I've got one final question for you. I think the Clive Cussler books were eBooks, were they not? Have you been traditionally published so far, or would you accept a trad publishing deal?

Russell: I'm a whore, so sure. Throw enough money at me, I'll do anything. Trust me, I would do anything.

You know, some of them have been traditionally published ... I don't know how many ... 1, 2, 3, maybe 5 or 6, no probably 8 or 9 of the books now have been bought by a company in Germany, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and traditionally published. I'm negotiating a deal right now for audio books, so I have nothing against the traditional publishing system. I had a wonderful time working with Neil over at Putnam when I was working on the Clive stuff, so I recognize it has a time and a place and I think that it's very good at getting your product in front of readers in a retail scenario, assuming the publisher puts its back into it.

I'm not sure how you guarantee that the traditional publisher is actually going to do anything besides shotgun it out with another 300,000 titles that are going to hit the shelves this year, and just see which ones start trending and then back those. That seems to be how that industry works.

James: That was your experience, Mark, wasn't it?

Mark: Don't get me started on that.

James: Yeah.

Russell: No, no. Look, the record business ... Years ago, I played music and produced people and did a bunch of stuff and it was the same.

You know, a hundred acts signed, they were all good, they were all tall enough to get on the ride, but the record company would put the same hundred grand behind every single one of them, give each one of them a video and it didn't really know which one was going to break big. It really didn't. The one, when it started trending, that's where they put their back into, and the other 99 just were forgotten.

Mark: Yeah, that's always been the way.

Russell: It's a shotgun effect, so ... I'm not sure I'm the right personality type to entrust my future and my career to a bunch of other, perhaps more disinterested parties.

Mark: Yeah, especially when, you know, you've demonstrated that you can almost certainly do it better than they can anyway, so why would you do it?

Russell: I wouldn't say that. That's very kind of you; it's very flattering. Let me put it this way: I think that I can reach a sufficient number of readers and communicate to them that I have a product that they would be interested in and then deliver a product that's good enough so they feel like coming back for more and that they got good value for their money. I feel like I can do that enough to where I don't really need traditional publishing. If there was a good fit, I'd be more than happy to take the right deal, but it's not like I will go to my grave with regret if I never got a traditional publishing deal.

James: Russell ... We've ticked well past the hour, Mark.

It's been truly great talking to you; it really has. I've thoroughly enjoyed it.

One of our taglines in the podcast is 'it's a great time to be a writer.' When I scroll down your list on Amazon, I think what a great time it is to be a reader. You've got all these books for free to start you off and then the books that follow up.

Not that long ago, before this whole revolution happened, we were paying 7, 8, 9 pounds a paperback; 10, 11, 12 bucks a paperback and here, your books are, in the UK at least, sort of between 3 and 4, 5 pounds. You've got the book series coming out in the summer, which is going to be discount. What a great time to be a reader when you've got great authors like yourself churning them out.

Russell: I think, yeah, and I'm a reader, so I win on both sides.

James: It's been great, hasn't it, Mark?

Mark: Yeah, absolutely, always a pleasure. It's the first time we've actually spoken, I think, Russell, isn't it?

Russell: Yeah, certainly, other than emails. That doesn't really count.

Mark: It's been really great fun; thanks for coming on.

Russell: It was my pleasure; anytime you want me back, I'll be more than happy to.

James: There we go. Russell Blake, what a great guy to talk to, really fun chap to talk to and somebody who's a little bit like you, Mark, in the sense that he gets nitty about it. He understands how it works and he kind of, very quickly adapts to different techniques and makes them work for him.

Mark: Gets nitty about it. I've never been described as nitty before.

James: Nitty. It's a poker term, isn't it?

Mark: Yeah. You know more about poker than I do.

Yeah, he is. He's very, very smart and he works really, really hard. That's one thing, I think, that comes out from the interview with him, is this is not easy. No one said that self-publishing was going to be an easy way to make a lot of money. It's easier than traditional publishing, but it still requires a lot of hard work. It requires the ability to switch hats, change your mindset and go from being creative to being a business person, and being prepared to market and promote yourself. That's essential.

Tenaciousness and doggedness: I think that came through really powerfully. Russell has both of those attributes in spades.

James: The two of you talked about the motivation of writing and enjoying your writing and getting on with this. As a newb in this area, I just wanted to chip in and say that I think before you've had any success at all, before you've written your book, before the first person's bought it, you've had any reviews, that's a different type of motivation that's needed. It's something we might go into with other authors in the future as well. That motivation and sitting down and knuckling down and writing when, actually, in the back of your mind, there's no strong sense of confidence that you're going to sell stuff.

You and Russell are in a different place there; you've got proven success behind you. Your motivation is slightly different. I'm just putting that in there, putting that out there for us newbies. It's not necessarily the same

way of looking at things when you think about, "How do I motivate myself to write?"

Mark: I think that's ... We should probably change the schedule around,

James. Next week will be Mark kicks James' ass.

James: To get on with it.

Mark: Exactly: get on with it. Much too lazy, you're not writing fast enough; get on with it.

James: Yeah, that is exactly what I need.

Thank you very much indeed for listening. We can't wait to be back with you on the next time out. Visit us on our Facebook group, email us if you want at support@selfpublishingformula.com and we'll see you next time.

Mark: Bye-bye.

James: Don't forget: you can win a great prize by helping spread the word about this podcast. Visit selfpublishingformula.com/contest to enter. The prize on offer is Mark Dawson's acclaimed paid premium course "Facebook Advertising for Authors," a course which isn't available to anyone at the moment, by the way. It also