



EPISODE 157: CINEMATIC BOOK TRAILERS: WHY YOU NEED ONE – WITH ADAM CUSHMAN

Speaker 1: On this edition of the Self Publishing Show.

Adam Cushman: As an author myself, I can't imagine going out with a book without some sort of video. Have something and have it be good.

Speaker 1: Publishing is changing. No more gatekeepers. No more barriers. No one standing between you and your readers. Do you want to make a living from your writing?

Join Indie Bestseller Mark Dawson and first-time author James Blatch as they shine the light on the secrets of self-publishing success. This is the Self Publishing Show. There's never been a better time to be a writer.

James Blatch: Hello and welcome to the Self-Publishing Show. I'm James Blatch.

Mark Dawson: And I am Mark Dawson.

James Blatch: Good morning, Mark Dawson or afternoon or evening depending on when people are listening to this. In fact, it's afternoon now. I probably should have said good afternoon.

Mark Dawson: Yes, that's traditional.

James Blatch: It is the traditional way of doing things, but we live in a time zone filled world. Doesn't matter. Good. What are you up to? You're a busy man.



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Mark Dawson: I am, yes. I'm working on some Beatrix Rose novels that I'm going to be releasing in the first quarter of this year. I'm rewriting some novellas and turning them into a novel to kind of prepare the way for some new stuff. So that's been interesting.

I'm in the process of putting some German translations out of Beatrix's books, which has been a long process. We'll have to do a podcast on that at some point, because it's been really hard work.

James Blatch: Okay.

Mark Dawson: But I'm pretty much there now. It's just a lot of balls to be juggled. You know, things like find a translator, that was fine. Found a really good one who has worked on Stieg Larsson and things like that.

But I hadn't remembered of course, that a translation is a new literary work which will have mistakes in it and so the translator needs an editor.

So it has been an interesting learning experience that if I do again, I will be slightly better prepared for than I was the first time.

James Blatch: Could be a module at some point, your experience of translation.

Mark Dawson: No, probably not. It's pretty ... if there was a 201 course, rather than 101, then maybe, but it's quite expensive. The processes cost 20 thousand euros probably for the translation.

James Blatch: Wow.

Mark Dawson: So it's not something that everyone can do, it's fairly involved.

James Blatch: You'd have to shift a few books then.



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Mark Dawson: Yes, that's the plan. We'll see. There'll be a lot of Amazon advertising, I think will be funneled to the Amazon.de store when those books go live.

James Blatch: Okay. Good. Okay, well look, before we do anything else, we've got a couple of things to talk about, but I do have a new batch of Patreon supporters for the Self Publishing Show to give a shout out to.

So you of course can become part of the merry band of our Patreon supporters who support us in producing this weekly show for writers. Just simply go to patreon.com/selfpublishingshow, and you can choose from various options and there are goodie bags attached to each of those, not the least a shout out from us.

So let me say a warm welcome to Jim Pugh from Georgia, in the United States. Hello to Linda Washington, hello to AJ Alexander from WA, which I think we discovered was Washington State, I think. Richard Hummell who is from Virginia, I know that one. Ivan Basich who is from Shaoxing, which is in China, I'm guessing Shaoxing, China, I think?

James Blatch: Richard Sayer from New Mexico in the United States, Lisa Scofield from MA, United States, Massachusetts?

Mark Dawson: Massachusetts.

James Blatch: Gotta be Massachusetts. Alicia McCulloch from Georgia, Chad V. Holtcamp from Illinois, Theresa Connor from Alabama, Tony Helmsworth, Janet Leigh ... famous actress, British Actress, Janet Leigh. Parenthi Kay and Christina Knapp, we want to say a very warm welcome to all of you, especially to our friend ... where is he, I've got to find his name again now ... Ivan Basich in Shaoxing. It says ... no, it says Shaoxing, CN.

Mark Dawson: China.

James Blatch: That is China? Sounds like it doesn't it?



Mark Dawson: Professionally handled as ever.

James Blatch: I know. Slick, isn't it? How brilliant though, to have someone from China, although Basich sounds like a European surname.

Mark Dawson: Well there are other people other than the Chinese in China.

James Blatch: Are you sure? Is that true?

Mark Dawson: Pretty confident of that.

James Blatch: I don't know if that's true, I'm going to have to Google that because I think once you're in China ... You and I can't go.

Thank you very much indeed, and I'm sorry if I murdered your name or your place, but we are delighted to have you on board, it's exciting and it means a lot to Mark and I.

I say this to people when they join, it's a daily task to get a show out every week, so it means a lot to us. Thank you. We'll have more of us chatting next us.

Mark Dawson: Was it recorded several weeks ago?

James Blatch: It was recorded several weeks ago. But that's how we roll most the time.

Mark Dawson: Yes.

James Blatch: That's with a guy called Adam Cushman, and he makes film photos. Now you talk about the red camera, he operates with red cameras. At the top end ... he has a sort of price list on his website and the red camera specifically mentioned as the top end, and you can pay, you know, \$20,000.00 for a trailer from him, or you can spend much, much less than that and get one put together.



He works at both ends of the spectrum and in the middle.

You've used him I think, for a trailer, is that right? I think so. So what I wanted to talk to him is what makes a good trailer, why we should be thinking about it.

Now in the middle of this interview, I was struggling to get out the trailer for my book, in fact, which we had made. I was experimenting with YouTube in the summer, trying to get YouTube ads working for books.

It's a really good trailer, I wanted to show it to him so I could get some feedback. I couldn't find it at the time, but I promise I will show it after the interview when we've heard from Adam.

James Blatch: Adam, hello. Welcome to the Self Publishing Show. Great to have you with us and great to be talking about video for authors.

Adam Cushman: Yes. Thank you for having me.

James Blatch: You're very welcome. We should say right at the outset, we're recording this in November, and you're in Los Angeles. I know from my own experience of flying out of Los Angeles, LAX on Friday, looking out the window at the massive wildfire there, it's a terrifying sight and you're not far away, so you have warned me that we may be interrupted by sirens and helicopters.

Adam Cushman: Most likely, the helicopters are about every 20, 30 minutes or so. I think they have it about 30 percent contained at this point. It's pretty rough.

James Blatch: Yeah, we just hope. Obviously by the time this goes out they'll be a memory rather than an active thing, so good luck with that. Okay, we are going to be talking about video trailers.



We're going to listen to a couple, we're going to watch a couple on YouTube as well. I fired one off prematurely there, we'll save that for a moment.

Let's just talk about the concept first of all, and then we'll talk a bit about you and your background, but the concept here is video trailers which traditionally I suppose, up until not that long ago were the domain of films and television programs, but it's a thing for all sorts of media.

You could make a video trailer for an art exhibition, for a radio program, and a book, let's face it, lends itself to video trailers, right?

Adam Cushman: Absolutely. And you can get a great deal of use out of them.

It's strange, because it's a form that's technically been around since I think 2002, when you started to see them online. And it's evolved considerably, especially in the last several years to where you're seeing videos with really high quality, almost like movie trailers, or at least of the same quality in terms of how they're shot, definitely like music videos.

But what's interesting about book trailers is that it's an umbrella term for any sort of video that promotes a book or an author. And if that's true then there are countless ways to do it and we've barely even scraped the surface in terms of the form, creating it and the possibilities of reaching not only existing audiences, but new readers.

The whole premise of this is that the new readers are spending 85 percent of their time or something like that online watching video, and trying to use that to compel them to go back to the page.

James Blatch: This is something, and I've just been in Las Vegas at a conference talking about using live video for authors. And what underpins my evangelical nature on the subject, and I'm sure yours as well is the



statistical uptake of video online is undeniable. It's just becoming a huge part of everyday life.

Adam Cushman: Absolutely, and audiences are becoming more refined and sophisticated in their viewing. The upshot of that is that the quality needs to be really good. The quality needs to be good and you need to reach people emotionally on some level.

James Blatch: Yeah, absolutely. The same with any bit of creative work. That's the key to it, isn't it?

Let's talk a little bit about you, Adam. What's your background?

Adam Cushman: My background is as a director, author, screenwriter. I was really in the publishing and book world for a number of years before I started doing these videos, and when I did, I didn't really know they existed.

As I said, I hadn't even seen one, to be honest. So around 2011 or thereabouts, I had a friend with a novel that he was self-publishing and he asked me to direct a trailer for him, and I was like, "Okay, but I don't really know what that is."

He introduced me to a whole gallery of them that were online, and across the board they were ... Not to be mean, but they were kind of universally bad. Not just in the way they were made, but there was no real love put into them. You could tell that they were sort of thrown together in 30 minutes on an iMovie program.

Directing it was very rewarding, the first one I mean, in that there were no rules and we could sort of play with the form and be inventive. It was a lot of fun to do and within a month or so it was a business.

I had other author friends who were watching it and they were telling me, "Oh, can you please make one for me?" Pretty much took off right away.



James Blatch: Okay. So it's now a business for you.

Adam Cushman: We've been going for about six years. At this point we've done over 400 videos, at this point.

James Blatch: Wow. So you're bringing Hollywood production values to book trailers.

Adam Cushman: That's the idea. It's an option. It's not a requirement. But part of the philosophy of what we were doing when we started was we recognized that there was a need for quality, but there was also the affordability factor.

The truth is, most authors outside of the big publishing houses don't have budgets set aside for video on that level. So we wanted to create effectively two strains. We wanted to create a spectrum of trailers that we could make for other very low budget, or very high, depending on what you were after, but also we wanted to make it affordable.

Knowing that most productions, even of our lower tiered productions are very high, and we're all independent filmmakers, we're all in the industry and we know how to get things done. So we felt that giving books the independent film treatment could pay off for everybody.

James Blatch: Let's have a look then, at a couple of examples, and let's start at the high end. Should we just watch this trailer first and I can ask you a couple of questions about it.

This is at the top end of the scale, full on production. This is called Half Bad, a book by Sally Green.

Speaker 2: The trick is to not mind. Not mind about it hurting, not mind about anything. Not minding is the trick, the only trick.



Speaker 2: On the lookout, all the time. Lookout for what? Something, anything, a mistake, chance, an oversight. The tiniest error by the white witch from hell. She makes mistakes, oh yes.

Speaker 2: And if that comes to nothing, you wait for the next one. Until you succeed. Until you're free.

James Blatch: Okay. Ramped up, tension, and I could tell straightaway that you'd hit the theme of that book on the head, because that is a Hunger Games-esque book, but a slightly more intense and threatening tone to that trailer than Hunger Games.

Adam Cushman: Yeah, and that comparison is how I think Penguin was positioning it at the time. It's gone on to ... I think Fox 2000, or I can't remember the name, which company bought it, but it's going to be a movie for sure pretty soon.

So yeah, that was one of the first trailers that we did for Penguin, Penguin Teen back in 2013 I want to say.

The way it was made basically is how we generally work with authors and publishers, is they come to us with an idea, either they have a preconceived script in mind, which we look at and approve or we don't.

In this case, we looked at the treatment, their one caveat was they didn't want to see faces in the video which is a big thing with book trailer making.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Adam Cushman: And a big argument in the industry and it's pretty valid, which is that if you are to see the faces of the characters before you read the book it could possibly denigrate or ruing the reading experience. Which is fair.



I think it really depends who the author is and what they want. Big publishers almost across the board don't want to see the faces, they want to leave them negative.

So our approach to it in Half Bad was to use the Requiem for a Dream style editing, in that you're only seeing portions or fragments of the features of the characters, so it's not too in your face.

But I would say it's about half and half. I mean, YA authors who are probably our biggest client base at this point, for many reasons, they tend to like to see the actors. They want to see the casting, they want to see the filmed iteration of their book. And I think their fans like to see it too.

The only thing about that is you have to get it right because they have very specific ways of imagining certain characters.

James Blatch: I wonder who's the most scared of seeing the characters imagined by seeing the faces of the performers. I wonder whether that's the author who's actually a bit scared of that as well.

Adam Cushman: Sometimes that's definitely the case. I think though largely it's just been the big criticism of book trailers.

Actually, that's really the only criticism of book trailers is that that can get in the way and the solution is simply don't show it. I mean you don't have to show actors. You don't have to show details. Really depends what you want to do with it.

However, that said, a lot of our authors end up using these videos to promote to Hollywood and producers and agents, and sometimes it can help to show the casting and who you have in mind, at least help them.

James Blatch: We'll talk about some of the many uses for book trailers in a minute, but let's just focus on this one a little bit longer. So this was, as you say, a big production number.



What's the cost of this type of trailer?

Adam Cushman: I think this one was around \$10,000.

James Blatch: Don't panic people listening because that is the high range and there is a affordable solution coming your way in a moment.

Just to put this in perspective, this was a location shoot and props were built.

Adam Cushman: It was. And it was done on a very tight deadline. We only had like 30 days to make this from the time we scripted until the final delivery.

We shot in rural Michigan with a crew out there that we like to work with especially when we need different weather, and the guys actually built that cage from the ground up in about two days and replicated it based on the narrative.

James Blatch: You obviously don't have a long list of BDSM clients in your contacts, but otherwise you could've easily got one of those cages from somewhere. So you built properly.

This is the amount of production value that goes into make a short film that can win an Oscar, right?

Adam Cushman: Oh sure. I mean our approach to making them is very similar to how actual movies are made. We're just doing it in a quicker amount of time for sure.

James Blatch: So, \$10,000 and you can spend \$10 to \$15,000 at the high end there if you're Penguin, Random House and got that kind of budget.

And before we move on and look at the lower end of it. It's worth pointing out that these trailers do have multi-purposes, so it's not just about a specific YouTube campaign or Facebook ad campaign.



It can be useful for the author in all sorts of ways to have this visual advertisement for the book, right?

Adam Cushman: Absolutely. I think that going back to the creation of these things. I think one of the mistakes was to call them book trailers because it's a bit of a generic term.

We haven't thought of anything better, but I think they're largely a misnomer because they give the sense that the video's designed solely to trail, much like a movie trailer.

Movie trailers, you see months before the film comes out and then you see it in the accompanying weeks of the release and then it disappears. And with books that's not the case.

You can get mileage out of these videos pretty much forever and it should be looked and viewed as an accompaniment to the book. As long as the book is on shelves you can get mileage out of the video.

James Blatch: In helping you sell the concepts of the book nothing works quite as well.

Let's talk about the elevator pitch, but it's effectively what this is, it's an elevator pitch for what your book is but it does it with a real punch and real visceral version of the theme of the book.

Adam Cushman: Yes, absolutely and it's a great way of reaching not just new audiences as far as readers go, but like I was saying, agents and producers in Hollywood, they have to much to do.

They don't have time to read everything. They barely have time to read their own client's work. So if you're pitching them and you sent a very quick email or however you're approaching them and just has a link, that can go a long way.



They really love seeing them and even screenwriters are now using videos, tone reels, trailers, mood reels to convey their storyline because there's just so much and there's so much being made.

I've also heard from, directly from producers that they like to see the videos done well as submissions because it gives them a sense, not only of the story that they would potentially read or make, but it also gives them a sense that you, as a creator know what they do and have some experience with production.

James Blatch: Gives them a warmer feeling about the possibility of going into business with you.

Let's go down to the more affordable end of this. This is a trailer that you created for our very own Mark Dawson.

Wow. Another impactful video. Well done on that ad. No cages needed to be built. No one had to fly to Michigan for that one. I guess you didn't leave the building to create that one.

Adam Cushman: No, no one had to even leave the house for that one.

James Blatch: No, and that included a bit of royalty music or some music and some imagery and I guess copy from the book.

How do you start creating a trailer like that for an author?

Adam Cushman: Correct. So with something like that we call those Title Teasers, and they're, as you said, they're created entirely in post-production and so really what we do, we just we ask the author for the book cover, the synopsis and any blurb reviews they might have.

And then we brand it and we come up with something that's sort of almost like a moving book cover in a lot of ways.



James Blatch: Do you start with the elements of the book, the actual book cover? Do you get like a Photoshop file of the layers of the book cover to work on?

Adam Cushman: For the Title Teasers, definitely it's huge because that's really the sell. Yeah, we get a sense of it. We read through all the material, read through all the blurbs and then put something very visually pleasing together, but again it's not something where you have to have a full out production in order to be branded, in order to reach audiences.

Some authors have a very small video budget so we wanted to accommodate that as well as create something that was better than the \$199 or whatever it is trailers that they still make on iMovie with the scrolling text.

James Blatch: That is definitely something that technology has enabled everybody to be a movie director these days and it's liberating in many ways and here we are making effectively a radio program and a TV show with the type of production value that would've cost a lot of money and be inaccessible 20 years ago, 10 years ago.

The downside of that is that everybody can make a trailer and they're not always great.

Adam Cushman: That's very true. I mean as an author myself I can't imagine going out with a book without some sort of video, but again, even our low end isn't always affordable, in which case have something, and have it be good.

I tell anyone who can't afford any sort of video that they should probably do a DIY video maybe of themselves. iPhone cameras are very high quality these days. Everyone knows someone who can shoot well.



Have something. Have something that even if it's not technically a trailer that's some sort of video that's pleasing that shows your passion and at least has the same level of passion that you put into the writing of the book.

James Blatch: The amount of stuff available to people, I suppose it still comes down to your ability to tell a visual story.

This is what you're bringing to this, is this career that you've spent in Hollywood thinking how stories work visually.

Adam Cushman: Partially, sure. We want to be faithful to the book. We want to be faithful to what the author is trying to accomplish, but we've done something like 400 of these videos at this point, and in doing so we've gotten ... I'd like to think we've gotten good at it, but we know how to narrow it down to its bare essence so that you're giving the audience ... I don't want to say sense impression, although I do think the one for the cleaner is more of a sense impression.

James Blatch: Yeah.

Adam Cushman: But you're giving them just a taste.

James Blatch: Sorry, just to correct myself. I'm not talking about you telling the story of the book but that actually would be a mistake. It would be a mistake in the blurb and the cover and the video trailer.

It's getting that sense of narrative now, getting the theme. What they're going to get for the book, which I think you've achieved very nicely with Mark's book there, and I suspect as also with the more expensive trailers as well.

So the second trailer that we looked at, Mark's trailer. How much are we talking about for that?

Adam Cushman: Those run about \$500.



James Blatch: So quite a step down from the full production.

Adam Cushman: Absolutely and we have it covered through pretty much the entire spectrum. So anywhere between \$500 and \$15,000. I mean, we can do something really good.

James Blatch: You say we. Who is this company? Is it you and who else?

Adam Cushman: Well I own the company and then I have about 100 different filmmakers in various capacities that work with us. We turned into a collective a little bit.

I don't count the actors in that, although there's beginning to sort of bit of an acting troop together with these local trailers. But it's pretty much me running it and then I've got about 27 different directors that I work with that work across the globe because we need to have it set up so that if your book take place in rural France we could possibly pull that off.

We just shot a trailer for *The One Memory of Flora Banks* in Iceland.

James Blatch: Wow.

Adam Cushman: We were able to go up to Iceland and film on location.

James Blatch: So your clients are not just authors who might be listening to the podcast, I mean actually traditional publishers, so do also listen to this podcast, I know for a fact, but also the big publishing houses as well. I mean that was an example I guess earlier for of Penguin.

Adam Cushman: Yes. We work pretty closely with Harper Teen and Penguin teen. And I found that as far as the big publishers who are investing in book trailers for their authors, which is not as many as there should be tend to be the young adult books for a number of reasons.



My feeling is that they see the movie at the end of the tunnel but also the readers and the audiences for those books are the people who are online as we were saying predominantly watching video.

James Blatch: So that is how you reach them.

Adam Cushman: Yeah, that's the biggest consumers of online video. Although that is going up across all the age ranges, as well. So definitely something to bear in mind as we go forward.

All forms of video are the area, and this is something that I'm interested in because we teach live video and use of live video and you just have a glance at the stats.

I was looking at one just the other day that picked out a survey of CEOs, of the top CEOs of how to contact them, how to get their attention and actually most of them now watch a couple minutes of video every day so you're more likely to get their attention sending them a link to a video than you are sending them an email.

James Blatch: And there's a reason for that, right, Adam, isn't it because it's a lot of information can be conveyed in a video.

Adam Cushman: Absolutely and again, it's easy to watch. It's predominantly what people are doing online and yeah, you can get endless uses out of 'em.

In addition to the 400 videos we're done we have more because very often authors will want different iterations of the videos because they found that they're so successful and they reach people that they want maybe a 15 second version of their trailer, or they want one with just the reviews on them.

Very often the authors want to appear in the video, which I think is great, especially, I mean, if you're writing numerous books, or you have the series,



and you're developing a fan base, people want to see you. You can do that in a very cinematic way.

James Blatch: That sounds really interesting prospect. So, talk us through the process then of how somebody goes about getting a trailer from you.

What does the author need to do to prepare for that moment?

Adam Cushman: Normally they come to us with the finished book, or an almost finished book. We read it and we read the synopsis, and we take a look at the book cover and if the author has any sort of preconceived script idea they can send that to us, and we'll discuss with them.

Sometimes it's realistic and sometimes ... in fact we just got one the other day that the author sent in the script, and it was ready to go, in our opinion.

James Blatch: Really?

Adam Cushman: If we can give them what they want we're happy to do that.

James Blatch: I'm guessing sometimes there's a mismatch between their expectation of what they can get for the budget, 'cause that often happens in video production world.

Adam Cushman: Not as much anymore. That's a great question. I mean, it used to come up pretty frequently.

I had an author. I won't name any names, but maybe years ago who went with our studio head package and then in the middle of production was like, "What do you think the chances are that we could get George Clooney to do the voice over?"

I was like, "Well, probably none." She's like, "Really? I mean for a \$10,000 video he won't come out just to read a few lines?"



So sometimes there are unreasonable expectations, but mostly our audiences and our clients are very sophisticated and have looked at what we do and have looked at the form for a while and done the research and yeah, they have very realistic expectations of what can be done at these budgets.

James Blatch: The author has essentially an idea. How often does the author have a fully-formed idea for you? Is that common?

Adam Cushman: It's not that common. I would say maybe one out of 10 or 20 have that. But mostly they don't and mostly the way it goes is that they will come to us and then we'll take all their material, and maybe they have a few gimmes in the beginning, like I really don't want to see human faces entirely. Or I really want to have a horse or something like this in this scene.

Then we try to work with whatever instructions we've been given, and we come up with a visualized treatment, which has the script and then reference photos for them, and it's all branded. And then we develop it with the author and the publisher and go back and forth until we get the green light to shoot.

James Blatch: And then you go out there to the wild with your crews, and then during the approval process, the editing stage, the author gets some rounds of editing?

Adam Cushman: Yes. Two rounds of revisions, it usually doesn't take more than that, and the whole process takes about 60 days.

James Blatch: Yeah, for a bigger production video. For the smaller production video, the lower end budget quicker-

Adam Cushman: Oh no, yeah, those are two, three weeks, tops.

James Blatch: Yeah. I was going to say. Okay, and I was just going to ask about the uses of the video.



At what point does the author say to you, "This is what I'm going to do with the video," and how does that shape the way you then create it?

Adam Cushman: It doesn't really, I mean they primarily do the same thing with, that's a really good question, too. Because, as you were saying, this is so new of a form, at least it seems perpetually new for some reason, there's still a lot of questions about what you do with them, and for the most part, I think that the mistake is to treat them like trailers, like I was saying, to treat them solely as trailers.

So once you realize that you can get that much mileage out of them and they can continue to pay for themselves for years, there's a lot of uses.

First of all, I mean, use them for presales. If you're going to have your book available on Amazon, have a trailer. Do what the movie trailers do, and then when the book comes out continue to use them.

You have then on YouTube, you have them on Vimeo, those are the primary video platforms. Have a really cool screenshot or a thumbnail, have one designed even. Make sure all your keywords are in place, but then what do you do with it?

You want to reach out to as many blogs as you can, as many targeted blogs that are in your genre, or websites or personal blogs that might find your work interesting.

Chances are good if you show them a really high-quality video you're helping them do their job, and they might want to help you. They might feature you in an interview, they might just love the trailer.

All that stuff helps, 'cause every place it's linked, as you know, is going to help you in search results and traffic and everything else.

Use the videos as ads, use them as layered ads in YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, you can get a lot of mileage out of those.



I don't have the stats to back it up, but I would say they're a lot more effective than a Google ad or just a text-based ad. And then you continue to throw it out there, you make different iterations of the videos and those guys, as I was saying, if reviews come out six months to a year later you can weave those into the trailer and re-release, just like you would a paperback.

And then approaching filmmakers, producers, agents, if you want it, and being that you want to see your movie on film.

The cool thing about the author's videos that we're starting to do that I was talking about is that they're not centric to one title, so you're basically selling your brand, who you are, who you are as an author, and you can get mileage out of those for every book that you release.

James Blatch: Is there a particular genre that works better for you or you prefer, or think lends itself to the former or do all genres equally work?

Adam Cushman: I think all genres equally work if you're creative in your approach to making them.

When we started doing these we were faced with the prospect of having an un-adaptable book. What do we do if it's dragons and vampires and knights from the Arthurian legend?

And the fact is less is more. You use negative space, you show portions of things. You imply things. Obviously, we're not going to do a full CGI Game of Thrones dragon swooping through, I mean, we could do that.

James Blatch: Well, you went twice then once, you can go back again.

Adam Cushman: But as far as genre no, as I said, the most common genre is the young adult in terms of the authors that approach us, but we do it all.



We do nonfiction, we do romance, we do fantasy, memoir, thriller, crime. We don't do a lot of religious material. We have for certain books on Buddhism and things like that, so maybe that would be trickier?

James Blatch: I'm sure you'd find a way though.

The existing industry, as you say, it's a new industry. You are a bit of a pioneer here, so you get to set the rules, which is the great thing about being a pioneer in this area.

We're going to say some surrounding people around producing video trailers, they have very heavy uses of stock video I've noticed so far.

Do you have a view on that?

Adam Cushman: Definitely. When we started making these and we were researching the existing trailers it was stock video city. Every one of them had very conspicuous footage that they'd pulled from online and the color didn't match and none of that.

Our feeling is that stock video is a wonderful tool, but if it's the whole show then it's going to be obvious and people aren't going to really respond to it.

But we don't use it a lot, but if we do you're never going to be able to tell, 'cause we like to weave it in seamlessly into the fabric of the trailer so it incorporates itself with the rest of the footage.

James Blatch: You better tell us where people can find you, Adam.

Adam Cushman: We are www.film-14.com. That's our homepage. It technically comes from a roulette number.

James Blatch: Oh, it does?



Adam Cushman: We were thinking of names. We were stuck. We were like book trailer is a terrible term, can we think of anything better? No, we've got nothing.

So just randomly I was like 14 has always been a very good number to me, which is true historically.

James Blatch: Right, it sounds like it's going well. You've got a big team of filmmakers out there. You're spearheading a new industry.

Is this more-or-less full time for you now? Are you still doing screenwriting and directing and elsewhere?

Adam Cushman: I'm primarily directing now. I've just done two feature films and I'm doing a third, but I also run the company and I oversee every project.

So yes, it's full time, but we so love what we're doing, and not just in terms of the filmmaking part of it, but from the aspect of books, it just feels like the more we do these the better we get at them and the more we make them ...

It really brings people back to reading, and that's the goal from our part from the beginning, which is we want all those younger audiences excited to read and excited to read books they might not ordinarily find without video driving it, too.

James Blatch: That's a great thing. Great, well Adam, we've had a few technical difficulties off air tonight, and I appreciate the time that you've spent with me. I did make this observation earlier, that you really do look like Billy, the director from Entourage. I think it's the headphones.

Adam Cushman: I get that a lot.

James Blatch: You do get that? I think it's the headphones as well, but he's a crazy character who I wouldn't rely on to produce a trailer for me, but I



would rely on you. You've obviously got your hearts in this as well, and you say bringing people back to reading is the noble cause I think we can all aspire to.

Adam Cushman: Thank you, appreciate that.

James Blatch: Now this is a must-watch episode on YouTube, because we are showing the trailers in the YouTube version, and it's not going to make a lot of sense to you just to simply listen to the soundtrack of a video trailer for obvious reasons.

I promised to show The Last Flight's video trailer, at least a version of it, and so let's have a look at that.

That was put together by John Stone, who edits this show, the Self Publishing Show. He's our video editor, and John put that together, as you can tell, using some Parthe News footage that I purchased from Pathe News, like a writer's type agency.

James Blatch: Okay. And then yes, it's from Stuart, who did the cover. So not a lot went into it in terms of outside assets, but a very powerful, and yet again, a very good book cover, very good video trailer, just missing the one element at this stage, which is the book to go with it, but more about that next week.

But yeah, so video. I mean, you talked about it when we were talking about the show at the beginning, Mark, that YouTube is becoming as easy to navigate to as NBC or BBC One in the UK.

Mark Dawson: Yeah, absolutely. It's definitely an area of fairly fast growth.

But more than that, Facebook is pushing hard for video content as well, so there are lots of places where we can put our videos up.



You can put videos on the Amazon product page now as well, so there are lots of places where we can use video to advertise whatever we're trying to sell.

I am experimenting with it quite a lot at the moment. I'm doing videos. I did a video ad that you edited for me, actually, for the last Milton release, and it really was just a case of me looking into this camera and just telling people what was coming out.

It's been a really successful launch, and I haven't dug into exactly why that is yet, but one of the reasons I suspect was because I was spending \$10 a day, I think, for the month of December, just pushing out these videos to a fairly warm audience, so my readers, people who visited my website, my Facebook followers, all of those kinds of people I know like my books were seeing this video, which is more engaging.

I can talk to them, they can see me. I can encourage them to hit the buy button, and I think that was working quite well.

And also Adam has done me, as we mentioned, Adam's done me a trailer for the Milton series, or at least the first in the series, and I've been using that here or there in ads as well, and seeing some decent success with that, too.

So it is an interesting growth area that I think authors would be wise to at least start to dig around in and see what's possible.

James Blatch: Yeah, and doing it well is important, because it's a bit like a book cover. If you do it badly it can have the opposite effect.

Good, well, I need to go for lunch. My wife's pacing up and down in the garden. I hope she's clearing out the dog poop.

Mark Dawson: I need go for lunch as well. We were supposed to be recording this earlier, but I postponed my lunch and-



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

James Blatch: Yeah, I'm sorry. It's unbelievable.

Mark Dawson: James was tidying up and forgot all about me.

James Blatch: I'm blaming my wife for everything, but I was, I have have decided to spring clean my messy office and I was about 15 minutes late.

Mark Dawson: Half an hour.

James Blatch: A little expanded chat, and I will update people on my book. There's definitely something to talk about there, and until then we're going to say goodbye for this week, and thank you so much indeed for watching.

Mark Dawson: Thank you very much and see you next week. Bye bye.

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