

I've Written A Book...Now What?



A Presentation by Bob McGough

You can interrupt me to
ask questions.
I look scary, but I'm not.



Who Is Bob?



- Started in 2012 with NaNoWriMo.
- After some mentoring, began to seriously self publish in 2021.
- Author, podcaster, indie game designer, freelancer.
- Collects useless academic degrees.
- Eagle Scout.
- Loves puns.

Why Should You Listen To Bob?

- Started traditionally-published.
- Completed NaNoWriMo 7 times.
- Went self-published.
- Has written 12 books.
- Capitol of Nightmares comes out June 2024 from Falstaff Books.



Moderate Expectations

The majority of authors don't sell many books.

The vast majority of authors don't make a livable wage doing this.

Statistically speaking the odds of you getting to do this full time are not good.

- Caveat: unless you have a spouse who can support you.

I didn't think my expectations could be any lower.....and, yet, I'm still disappointed.



somee cards
user card

Define What Success Looks Like



What success looks like?

You are unlikely to be a bestseller.

You are unlikely to become full time.

In that case, what does success look like?

You need to figure that out.

Give Yourself Smaller Goals

“Become a full time author,” is a big goal. At best it will take years to get there.

In the meantime, what are the smaller goals that will help get you to the bigger goal?

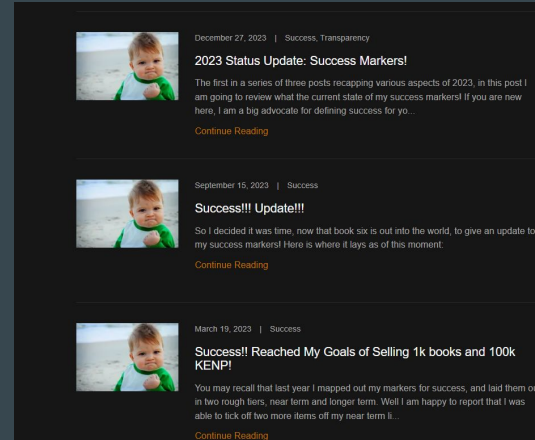
Establish those.

Celebrate each and every one of them!

I set goals.

Here are my current short-term goals, with the bold items being ones I have completed at the time of writing this:

1. **Get 100 reviews on a book.**
2. **Do six panels at Dragon Con.**
3. **Sell 1,000 books.**
4. **100,000 KENP read.**
5. Have a \$1,000 book launch.
6. **Have a \$1,000 month in a non-launch month.**
7. Sell 5,000 books.
8. **Instagram over 500 likes.**
9. Facebook over 1,000 follows.
10. **250 subscribers to my email list.**
11. **Four Patreon patrons.**



I celebrate them

Decide What Path You Want To Take

Self-Publishing

- Pro: you have all the control.
- Con: you have all the control.
- You will have to learn how to do many tasks, or have the money to pay someone to do them.
- Less credibility, but easier to achieve a published book.

Traditional Publishing

- Will require an agent
- Will require established social media
- Won't require hiring editors, cover designers, etc.
- More credibility, but not as easy to achieve a published book.

Like two mules fighting over a turnip.

Social Media

No matter what path you want to take, you are going to have to have social media.

It is better to not have a particular social media, than to have one you are not using.

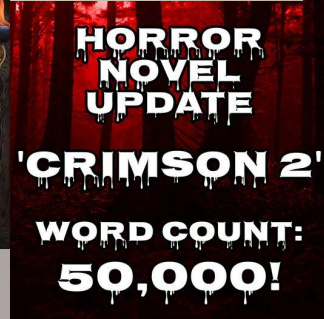
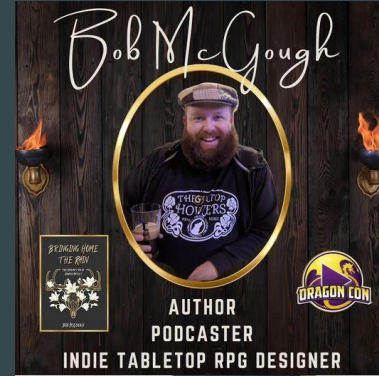
If you don't use it, they may assume you have stopped.

Do at least one post a week.

Keep in mind that people who follow authors on social media don't do it purely for content related to the books. They want to get to know the person. You have interests, share them.

Some recent images from my socials.

I struggle to articulate my political stance sometimes, but this picture of a possum screaming at a bald eagle pretty much sums it up



Claim Your Turf

Social media is not 'your turf.' It belongs to Instagram/Pinterest/Facebook/etc.

Your turf is your website and your newsletter. They are the only places where you control the rules.



No, not this kind of turf.

Claim Your Turf: Newsletters

This is your single best marketing tool.

There is no algorithm blocking it from some of your followers.

You have total control, unlike social media which can change the rules at any point.

It is free (usually) until you get to several thousand people on your list.

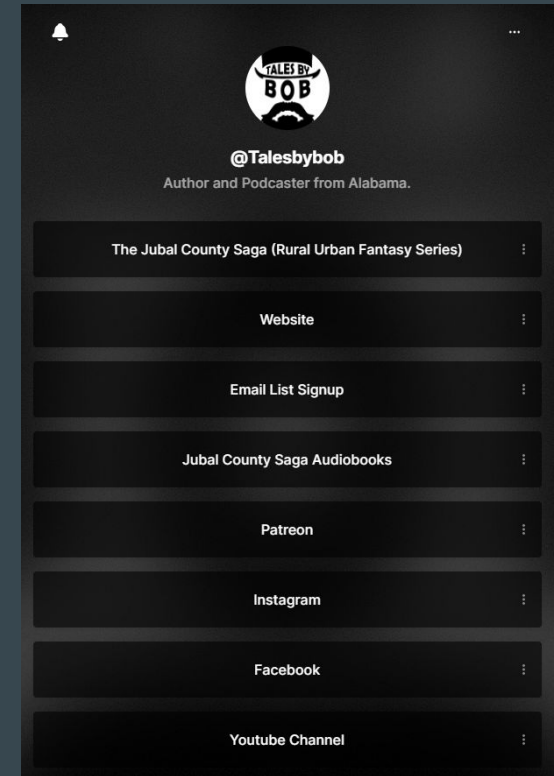
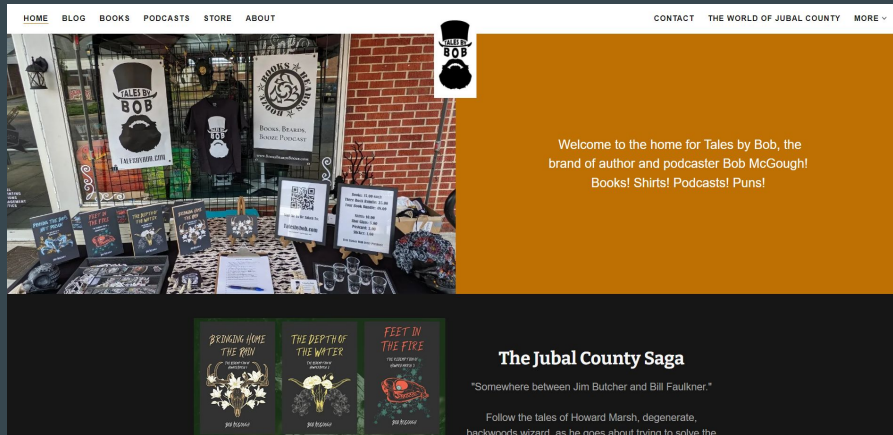


Claim Your Turf: Website/Linktree

Unless you start posting nazi stuff/child porn/etc so long as you pay the bill your website will never go away.

If you can't afford a website, use a linktree until you can justify the expense.

Get a real url. People are snobs, if they see wix.authername.com they will view you as less than professional.



Networking



Go to events where there are authors. Workshops, comic cons, library events, etc.

Ask them questions. Get to know them.

Talk to the people attending these events, your fellow would-be authors. Get to know them.

You never know what sort of opportunity might come from it.

I ended up talking to this guy for about 15 minutes.

Marketing

You will be responsible for all (self-publishing) or most (trad-publishing) of the marketing of your book.

Broadly speaking there are two paths (they are not mutually exclusive):

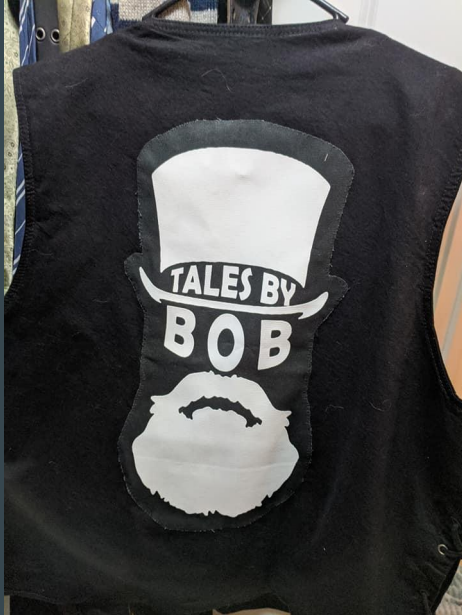
- Paying for ads on website like Facebook or Amazon
- In person or organic marketing

Marketing is its own workshop. You can go watch a video presentation of me giving my Organic Marketing for Authors workshop on my website/youtube channel.



Branding

It is never too early to start establishing your brand.



Self-Publishing Specific

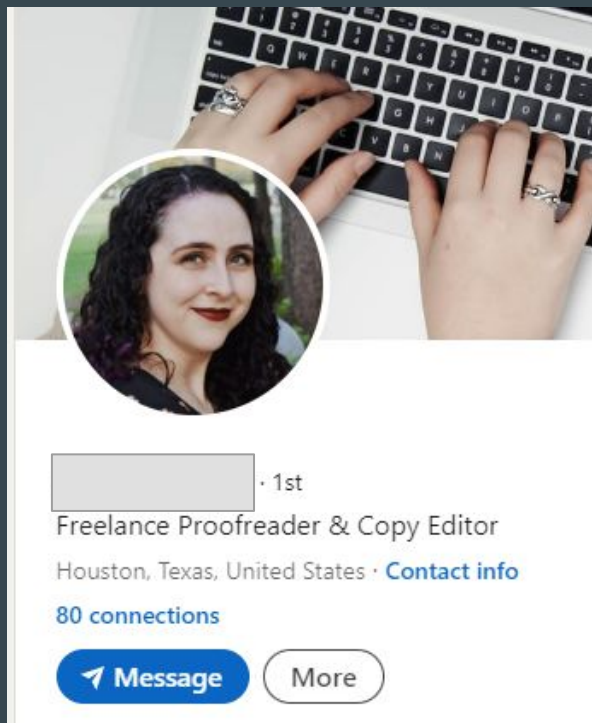
Editing - Self-Published

This will probably be your biggest expense.

You can't edit your own book.

You don't want your friends/family to edit your book.

Pay for the most editing you can afford.



My editor. She's fantastic.

Covers

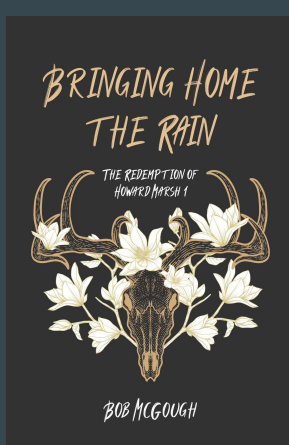
You can learn this skill.

I don't recommend that you do.

Don't use AI.

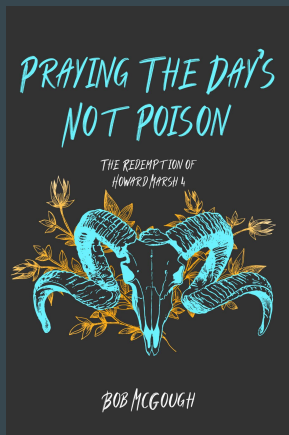
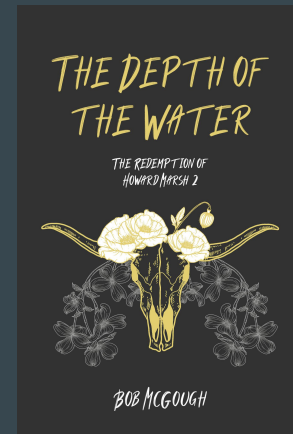
Expect to spend a couple hundred dollars for a decent cover.

Folks absolutely will judge your book by the cover. That's the point.



I paid for this one

I paid for this one, hated it, and fixed it myself.



I made this one.

Trad-Publishing Specific

Get An Agent

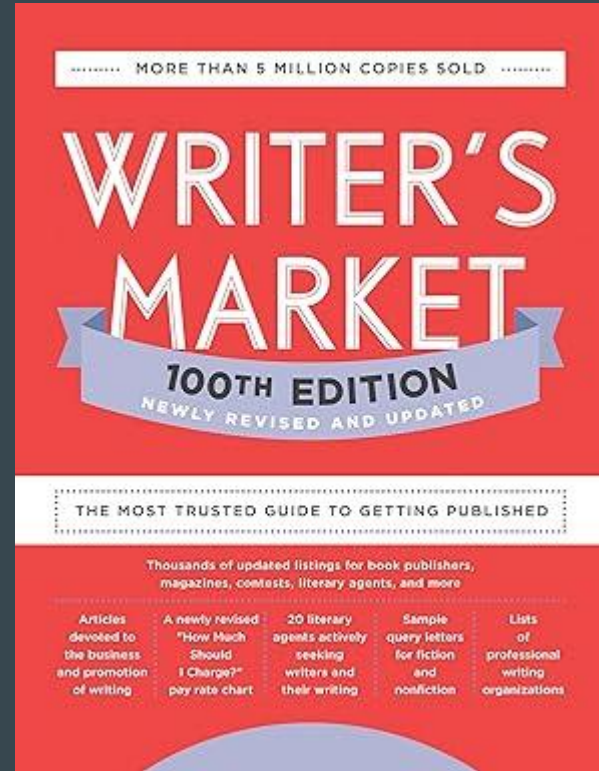
Learn how to write a query letter.
Workshop it. Repeatedly.

Twitter is still a place where editors hang out.

There are in person events that will connect you with agents. Pay to play.

You can email agents/agencies directly.

They are going to judge your social media presence.



Editing - Trad-Published

It does not make sense to pay to have your whole book edited.

Editing is expensive.

At most pay to have the first 10-50 pages edited.

Make your first page perfect.

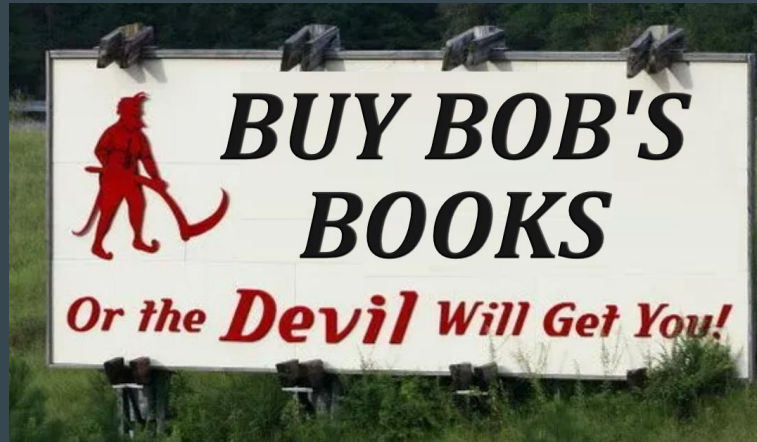
No, more perfect.



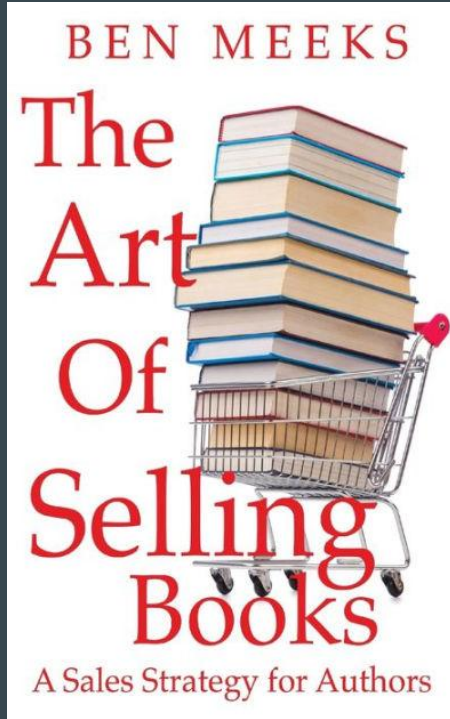
Jusk Ask

If you take no other advice from this presentation:

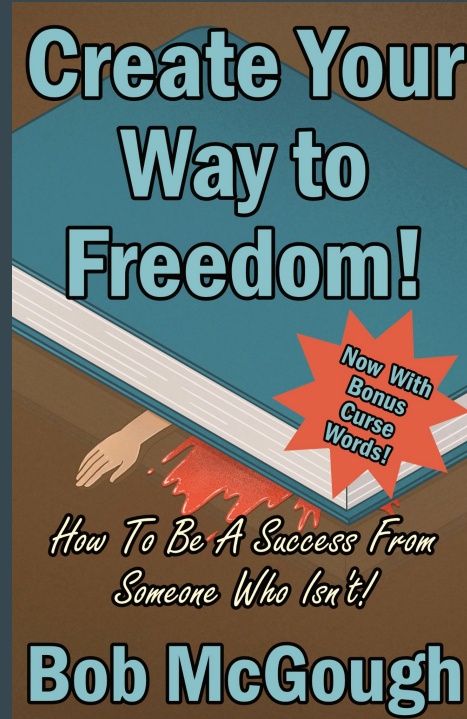
Just ask.



Books I Recommend



Out now.



Coming out soon.

Thank You

A copy of this presentation can be found on my website. You can also use the contact form there to ask me any questions about...well pretty much anything really.

www.talesbybob.com