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**Sent:** Wednesday, August 20, 2008 5:26 PM  
**To:**  
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### **FROM THE DESK OF...**

Short letter this week, as I have a lot of agent-type stuff to do.

I have **Laurie Alice Eakes** on my blog this week bloggin' about the five senses. Sign up at: [www.perilsofpublishing.com](http://www.perilsofpublishing.com)

[Lookin' for someone to guest blog next week. If interested, e-mail Laura Drake at: [laura\\_drake1123@yahoo.com](mailto:laura_drake1123@yahoo.com)]

Still need info for the **Perils of Publishing** site. Please e-mail your links, workshop handouts, and free yellow page ads if you're a writer with a writing-related business to: [gayle@busymama.net](mailto:gayle@busymama.net). Type: "Link (the category)," "Handout (the category)," or "Writers 4 Writers" in the subject line. Thanks!

### **Correction:**

It seems I made an error in the last edition of the *Perils of Publishing* newsletter. My hubby (he's such a sweet man) pointed out that the weapon he bought me was a .38, not a .35 (*beastly!*). I'll never be able to show my face at the shooting range again. Oh, wait ... we have our own (hehehe).

Welcome to My World

### **Commitment**

No, I keep tellin' you, I'm not being committed!

Has anyone ever asked ya what you're committed to? I was talkin' with the head of a publishing house (whom I hold in high regard), during the recent RWA Conference and that question came up.

I started my list: "I'm committed to helping people, which I do by being an agent, and being a small publisher, and being an editor, and being a cheerleader, and I'm writing a book on writing to help the pre-published get published, and I started a new business using fab fabrics and boffo bling for constructing and embellishing handbags, laptop carriers, briefcases, diaper bags, and totes (trust me, a lot of y'all need that kinda help ... actually, a percentage of the profits will go to charity). Oh, and I work my land, and take care of my family, and..."

She held up her hand. My next word came to a skittering halt, mid-syllable. She said, "You have too many 'ands'."

*Hmm.* What am I supposed to cut out? She simply didn't "get" Kelly Mortimer. So, I gave her great reasons for continuing to do every item on my list. Then she went "Dr. Laura" on me. Ya know, Dr. Laura, radio host extraordinaire, asks someone why they do something and they reply, "I don't know." She won't accept that as an answer. The good doc keeps digging, searching for that horrid hidden answer only she can squeeze out, forcing the person to come to grips with her true self and all the problems attached. (No comment.)

But I *knew*. My "ands" weren't problems. I could handle 'em. This woman either wasn't understanding my unique style of speech I call "Kelly-speak," or she didn't believe me. She gave me a perplexed/frustrated look, then told me to pick one. (*Sophie's Choice* came to mind. Like, should I cut off my arm or my leg? How'm I gonna stop bein' me? Trust me, I've made several unsuccessful attempts.)

Well, she kept tryin'. Alotta gumption in this gal. Obviously, she meant choose a career path, so for the moment, my hubby (he's such a sweet man) remains safe. I told her I'd made a commitment to my literary clients, and I'd keep it unless my health prevented me. Also, the new business, 4 Gals Designs ([www.4galsdesigns.com](http://www.4galsdesigns.com) ... sorry, couldn't help it...), couldn't fold either. Doctor's orders (hehehe). I need a more "creative" outlet than fixing passive sentences, and using my hands to type "I'm sorry" letters. (Talk about commitment, I win. In a few days, all my handbags [the one's I didn't make] go on the block on eBay. Goodbye, Ralph Lauren. Goodbye vintage-50's-bag-covered-in-clear-vinyl-with-faux-flowers-beneath-it, goodbye little Channel clutch...)

She sensed a breakthrough (I think; I wasn't in her POV). Great. She instructed me to be the best agent I could be. I nodded. "I am." This poor woman gave me that perplexed/frustrated look again and leaned in closer. I thought she was really gonna let me have it. Instead, she asked me how many clients I had. I told her, fifteen.

She shook her head. "That limits you too much. You need to add more clients to build your business into the best agency you can. You'll never make big money this way." (Don't y'all run to the site to see if I'm takin' open submissions, cuz I ain't.)

*Hmm.* "No can do." I then explained I didn't become an agent to earn money, and that I'd never taken a paycheck since I started the business. I just wanted to be the best agent to my fifteen, and if I kept adding clients, I couldn't fulfill that promise. I couldn't help my existing clients the way I should.

Now I'm thinkin' this gal not only wants to slap me silly (too late; I've been silly way too long for her to get the credit), she thinks I'm a nut as well (okay, so one outta two...).

She takes a deep breath; I'm holdin' mine. "Kelly, we'll say you're the best of the best of all agents." (A stretch, but I can live with it.) "You can't be any better. What does your soul tell you? What is it you *really* want?"

(Sigh.) Monumental question that requires a moment of careful reflection, but I answer immediately. "I wish I could help thirty, instead of fifteen."

She sat back. (No more intimate lean.) That's it. I'm dead-meat. Simultaneously, her editor (whom I also hold in high regard) came over and sat down. I never show fear, but I dreaded what the publisher might say to that editor (who's considering several of my projects). Would this publisher (did I mention I hold her in high regard?) call me crazy then and there, in the crowded lobby; or behind my back when they were alone and could diss me unhampered? (If given a choice, I'd opt for door number two.) She opted for door number one.

Publisher turns toward editor and says, "I'm really impressed with this woman."

Welcome to my world. (Sigh.)

## The Dirt

### **Everyone Loves the Underdog (We're countin' on it...)**

*Raging rapids aren't the only thing causing turbulence in the lives of a river rafting guide and an undercover FBI agent ... catching criminals is as dangerous as the undercurrent of attraction they have for each other.*

Underdog Press is pre-selling **Robin Miller** w/a **Robin Carroll's** debut single title inspirational romantic suspense, ***Torrents of Destruction***, available in trade paperback and scheduled for a mid-November release. (Note: Was scheduled for an October release, but we're trying to get a package deal from the printer. Sigh.)

***Torrents*** earns an "E" rating. (Like a PG movie. Learn more about our rating system at [www.underdogpress.com](http://www.underdogpress.com)). We have an exciting video trailer (thanks to the efforts of the maaavelous Natalie Eggeman) for ***Torrents*** that takes just over a minute to view (I know y'all have short attention spans). Visit our secure site at: [www.underdogpress.com](http://www.underdogpress.com) to view the trailer and reserve your copy. Visit Robin at: [www.robincaroll.com](http://www.robincaroll.com).

### **AND:**

*"Do you know how to make the gods laugh, Ceana? Tell them of your plans."*

Underdog's second release, ***Celtic Sacrifice*** by **Sheryl Brennan** is on the site and the video trailer is waitin' for ya (thanks to the efforts of the D-lightful Dee Owens), so hop on over to watch it, then pre-order. This book is rated "A" for "Adults." (No, that doesn't mean like rated "X," but like rated "R.") ***Celtic Sacrifice*** will be in available in trade paperback, scheduled for a late November release. To buy your copy, visit our secure site: [www.underdogpress.com](http://www.underdogpress.com)

### **S&S Children's Starts Film Unit**

Simon & Schuster's Children's division has partnered with Gotham Group, a Los Angeles-based management firm, to develop book properties for film, starting with *Alienated*, director David O. Russell's upcoming middle-grade book series. "It's about having more control in the process," Rick Richter, president and publisher of Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing, told the New York Times.

The Times offers a painstakingly clueless account of how this might aid S&S, with no sense of other film partnerships struck by other big six houses recently. [[NYT](#)]

### **B&N Won't Bid For Borders**

It's kind of funny, actually. Now the WSJ reports what we've been saying all along: that Barnes & Noble is not expected to bid for Borders, citing in part "the tight lending markets that likely would make it difficult to arrange bank financing" and high-lease prices on some of Borders' stores. It was the Journal touting BN's head fake in May that "it had assembled a team of senior executives and advisers to study the possibility of acquiring Borders" that gave Borders stock a pop even as the stronger Barnes & Noble has declined during the summer sell-off. (Both stocks have recovered somewhat since this summer's deepest lows.)

The paper cites a source as indicating that Borders "hopes to complete the auction by the end of September." [[WSJ](#)]

### **China Print Costs Hit Publishers Hard**

Print costs in China have reached "unprecedented" levels, reports the Bookseller, raising concerns that new titles could be delayed or cancelled. UK novelty, gift and illustrated publishers are the hardest hit as the combination of paper and oil price rises, new labour laws and fluctuations in the US dollar and RMB--which has seen Chinese printing costs surge by up to 40% since the beginning of the year--hit home.

Kate Skipper, children's buyer for ages 0-5 at Waterstone's, said: "We are seeing prices for novelty titles go up and we think the next year will be significantly different in terms of what is being published." But Christian Herrison, sales director at Usborne, said: "We will have to look at price increases because labour costs, printing and materials have all gone up. We're going to work through that--there is no way we will cut our baby and pre-school lists--but we will have to work harder with our printers and give ourselves longer lead times to make sure we meet our schedules." [[Bookseller](#) ]

### **F+W/Adams Media Accounting Practices Questioned**

After author Sherry Argov won a \$209,000 arbitration judgment as compensation for withheld royalties and "deceptive accounting practices" on her book *Why Men Love Bitches* from F+W Publishing, the Authors Guild is now looking into the company's accounting practices, as well as the admission that there is "no system in place for tracking inbound Royalty Statements from translation rights deals." [*Beastly!* Well, I guess I'm fortunate they rejected my *Perils of Publishing* proposal...]

### **S&S Goes Hollywood with Gotham Group**

By Rachel Deahl -- *Publishers Weekly*

After years of working informally with the Los Angeles-based management company The Gotham Group, Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing has made a more formal arrangement with the Hollywood outfit. In a bid to reap deeper financial rewards from book-to-film deals, S&S Children's will get a cut of films based on literary properties it retains film rights for that Gotham turns into movies.

"We've found historically that New York publishing and Hollywood have eyed each other nervously across the dance floor for years," Rick Richter, president and publisher of S&S Children's Publishing, told *PW*. This deal, he said, comes out of a realization that "if we come together we have more of an influence on the outcome."

Although publishers like Random House and HarperCollins have struck their own deals to get a bigger stake in Hollywood literary adaptations--Random House has partnered with Focus Features on [Random House Films](#) and HarperCollins has established [Sharp](#)

**Independent at HarperCollins**-the S&S-Gotham deal is unique. Whereas Random is cofinancing films with Focus, S&S will not be investing money in production. Instead, because the house controls the material-the deal pertains only to works that S&S has the film rights for-it will share the revenue with Gotham. And, in a symbiotic relationship with Gotham, S&S will also turn certain projects from Gotham into books.

Since the development cycle for Hollywood material can be lengthy, the hope is that S&S can turn certain film-bound stories from Gotham into bestsellers. "The creation of a book," Richter explained, "is not an expensive proposition from a development standpoint. And we're bringing an equity to the table that wouldn't otherwise be there."

Although it's rare for publishers to retain film rights to adult titles, it's less rare for a house to get film rights in children's, which is one reason why the partnership with Gotham is resting in Simon & Schuster's children's division.

Ellen Goldsmith Vein at Gotham Group said, "The thing we're excited about is bringing filmmakers and writers to Simon & Schuster that they haven't had the opportunity to work with in the past." To that end, as the *New York Times* reported, filmmaker David O. Russell (*Three Kings*) is working on a book series for S&S called *Alienated*, which is slated as a trilogy and set for a fall 2009 release, as well as drafting a screenplay around the idea.

Goldsmith Vein told *PW* that the idea for *Alienated* originated with her producing partner on the project, Mike Richardson, president of Dark Horse. She said Richardson pitched the idea for *Alienated* to Russell and, after discussions, the three realized it made sense to do something in book publishing as well.

Although neither party mentioned other projects, Richter said the partnership will yield "as many projects as makes sense." He estimated that, over the past three to five years, S&S Children's has placed more than 100 projects under option through Gotham.

### **Debate Over Chronological Bible**

Leaving aside the unsubstantiated (and incorrect) characterization of "the midst of a Bible-publishing boom," USA Today has a long piece looking at Thomas Nelson's forthcoming CHRONOLOGICAL STUDY BIBLE. "The latest edition rejiggers the order of books, psalms, and Gospels in an effort to provide a historical framework for a text most scholars consider chronologically challenged." But some scholars regard the exercise as non-productive and even confusing: "For some biblical accounts, such as the Israelites' exile to Babylon, there are historical accounts to support the narrative. Other stories require a leap of faith, however.

Scholars say trying to rearrange individual books requires getting to the bottom of some of the world's oldest known cases of identity theft: Many biblical works were the handiwork of multiple authors, all writing under a single name." [USAT]

Market Moves

### **EDITORS**

Marjorie Braman will take up the long-vacant post of editor-in-chief at Henry Holt, starting September 8. An executive editor at HarperCollins, she has been there for 12 years.

## New Imprints

### **S&S's Johnston Names Her New Imprint**

By Diane Roback, Children's Bookshelf

Former Harcourt editor-in-chief Allyn Johnston, who joined Simon & Schuster in March to start a new imprint, has given that imprint a name: Beach Lane Books. The imprint, like Johnston, is based in San Diego, and will debut in summer 2009.

## Writing Opportunities

(Please e-mail your writing ops info, in a format I can cut and paste, to:  
[kmortimer@mortimerliterary.com](mailto:kmortimer@mortimerliterary.com). Type: "Writing Ops" in the subject line. Thanks!)

### **ONLINE DISTRIBUTOR SEEKING INDEPENDENT FILMS FEATURES & SHORT FILMS PLUS WIN UP TO \$600 IN THE AUGUST COMMUNITY CHALLENGE!**

Eyesoda.com, a new online community for both filmmakers and film lovers, is seeking more independent films for our film-on-demand business. By hosting your film, at no charge, with Eyesoda.com you'll be able to not only promote your film online via your film profile, but also generate revenue. Our distribution agreement is non-exclusive and we work with you to promote your film!

How Eyesoda.com is Different: Eyesoda.com is unlike any of the other online portals designed to sell DVDs or rental access to your films. We will use a combination of online marketing methods to promote each film in our catalogue. Every filmmaker and every film gets personal attention. Additionally, Eyesoda.com is a community as well as a platform designed to help you interact with your audience via Web 2.0 technology. So, you can send and receive messages, host events and engage viewers in a new way using the Web.

How it works: Eyesoda.com members pay a small fee (\$2-\$10) to see each film. Filmmakers get 50% of the revenue for all ticket sales. If we run any video advertising before you film or trailer, you get 50% of that revenue too.

August Promotion - Win Big: Each month, Eyesoda.com has a different contest for viewers and filmmakers. During the month of August, Eyesoda filmmakers can participate in the "Community Challenge." We'll be awarding three prizes: 1st - \$500, 2nd - \$300 and 3rd - \$200 to the members that build the largest community via Eyesoda. You get a point for every person in your Community - this means the more friends and colleagues you get to join, the more likely you are to win, not to mention being able to interact with your friends in a new collaborate way around your films and other.

Details: We are currently seeking features, as well as short films of 10+ minutes. This could include multiple shorts edited together in one file. Check out "How to Get Started" for Filmmakers to submit your film today at:

[www.eyesoda.com/page/19](http://www.eyesoda.com/page/19)

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OR call LaShaun Williams, SodaPro Relations Manager at (480) 363-6324,  
[shaun.w@eyesoda.com](mailto:shaun.w@eyesoda.com)

**FULL-LENGTH AND ONE-ACT PLAYS WANTED FOR PRODUCTION**

The Edgemar Center for the Arts is a two-theater complex located in the Frank Gehry building in the heart of Santa Monica, with board members including Steven Spielberg, Jason Alexander, Neil Simon, Kate Capshaw, and others. The Edgemar Theater Group is our resident theatre company which is looking for NEW WORKS for the Lab Theatre Season.

We are looking for full-length and one-act plays to be included in our monthly reading of selected scripts, which may then be considered for production by the company.

We are open to all genres, comedy and drama, including "cutting edge" works. Unpublished and unproduced plays are preferred, but we are open to plays which may have had a small run or "limited exposure."

This is a wonderful opportunity for writers to hear their works read by a group of talented actors, with the possibility of having your work produced by an established and reputable company.

TO SUBMIT:

E-mail scripts and your contact information to Les Brandt at: [literary@edgemarcenter.org](mailto:literary@edgemarcenter.org)

OR scripts can be mailed to:

The Edgemar Center

Literary Dept

Attn: InfoList Priority Submission

2437 Main Street

Santa Monica, CA 90405

For more information on the Edgemar Center, please visit:

[www.edgemarcenter.org](http://www.edgemarcenter.org)

Until we meet again ... may God bless and keep you,

Kelly

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