



INTERVIEW with an INTERNET PUBLISHER

Thanks to various websites, regular people are becoming celebrities. You can start a blog, post videos of yourself singing, and now you can start a publishing company. Jacob Kier of Permuted Press tells us about the hows and whys of his small press publishing house.

“First of all, why did you start Permuted Press?”

“I’ve always been a book lover and fascinated with authors and writing and the whole industry. In 2004 I learned of print on demand (POD) technology for printing books. POD was gaining popularity because of the much lower startup cost to produce a book.

So I learned about POD technology just after reading Simon Clark’s BLOOD CRAZY and Brian Keene’s THE RISING and thought—as I know now very naively—“Hey, it seems really easy to publish a POD book, how cool would it be to publish a zombie anthology?!” Then I set up a website, put out the submission call, and here we are 17 books later.”

“What is POD exactly?”

“Traditionally a book publisher prints a run of books, sells as many copies as they can, and stores the rest in a warehouse. At some point the book either sells out or stops selling enough copies to make it worthwhile to continue to store the excess stock. With POD technology publishers can now publish a book without the large upfront investment to print a huge number of books and store them while attempting to make sales. POD allows the publisher to set up the title in sort of a virtual book store. No copies of the book exist until a customer wants to purchase one: a single copy of the book is printed right at the time of sale. The individual copies of the book end up being a little more expensive than a traditionally printed book, but the upfront cost is much, much lower for the publisher.

What really makes this all work is the internet (and specifically internet bookstores). While a customer generally won’t be able to go to their local bookstore and find a copy of a book printed with POD technology on the shelf, they can go to virtually any online book store, order the book, and receive the printed book—which was printed specifically to meet their order—within a few days. So, ideally, the more internet sales grow the more feasible using POD technology becomes for book publishers.”

“So you’ve figured out how to publish. How about deciding on what to publish?”

“While I won’t say my choice of projects completely ignores the marketability, I generally choose books or anthologies that line up with my personal interests. I love zombies and apocalyp-

tic works, so in general we focus on those. I’m a big fan of Lovecraft’s Cthulhu myth, so we’re working a genre-blending mythos anthology called CROSS-GENRE CTHULHU. I also like works that put a new twist on a popular theme or subject, like Jason S. Hornsby’s surreal, nihilistic zombie novel EVERY SIGH, THE END.”

“How much of the work do you do yourself? Are you also involved in the design of your books?”

“I run all of the business aspect of Permuted (paying the bills, etc.) I select most of the novels we publish, and have done reading and story selection for some of our anthologies. I sometimes do cover layouts (not the artwork itself) and book layouts.”

“Small presses come and go, but Permuted’s been around for four years. What is it that’s kept PP still in business?”

“I think our success has been a combination of luck and great talent. We started publishing zombie fiction right as the popularity of zombies was really starting to ramp up, and I’m sure that focus in the interest of the horror fans out there has helped us immensely. Beyond that we’ve had the opportunity to work with some great authors and freelance editors—D.L. Snell in particular—that have helped us build a reputation for good material.

“Right now you’ve stuck to printed books and serialized online novels. Are you planning on branching out into other media?”

“Early on we ventured into e-Books without much success, but I imagine we’ll revisit that market at some point. A few of our novels—such as JOHN DIES AT THE END—have been (or are in the process of being) optioned for film, but Permuted doesn’t have a direct hand in that. For quite some time I’ve considered branching out into the comic book/graphic novel realm, but we have no definite plans at this point.”

“Do you think the new possibilities offered by the internet will change the publishing industry as we know it today?”

“I think new technologies like POD, e-Books, e-Book readers, etc. will continue to grow and take up more of the market. That said, I don’t think good old traditional paper books are going away, they’ll continue to hold the majority of the market for a very long time.”

“There’s probably a lot of people out there thinking about starting their own publishing house. What is essential to people new to the business? Do you have any advice for people who would want to try their own hand at publishing?”

“I’d advise anyone who wants to get into publishing to do [a lot of] background preparation. It’s the same process one should go through when starting any business: research the market, learn about how books are produced and distributed, research the volume of sales you can realistically expect, start networking with those who have experience in the business and learn as much as you can. Do these things BEFORE you decide to start a publishing company.”

“Looking back, is there anything you would do differently this time around?”

“Then I started out to do our first anthology I had no intention of building a publishing company, I was just doing one book for fun. I really didn’t know anything about the publishing industry, how distribution works, how to go about properly calling for submissions, etc. Had I known Permuted Press would become what it has I would have spent more time learning about the business, talking to publishers and published authors.”

“Is there anything you want to add?”

“Anyone interested in interacting with our authors please visit our message board via www.permutedpress.com.”

By Leah Clarke & Zuzana Chomova

Ghost Story Part III

While working on her thesis Cassandra began to wonder if the library was haunted. When she was down in the Magazijn, she encountered a scary man who murdered another girl before her eyes and he is about to murder Cassandra too...

Cassandra kept on running and running until she was at the front desk. The woman behind the desk looked at her questioningly. Cassandra said, all out of breath: “There’s... a body... girl... murdered... downstairs!”

The woman sat up straight and said: “Are you sure?”

“Of course... I’m sure... I... saw it happen!” answered Cassandra.

The woman looked at Cassandra’s face very closely and did not make any inclination at all to get up and take a look at the body in her own library.

“Why aren’t you looking?” yelled Cassandra, “there’s someone there who’s dead!”

A handful of students near the door had started to look their way now. The woman behind the desk noticed it and got up.

“All right,” she said, “I’ll take you down there and we’ll have a look.”

“I don’t want to go back. I...”

“You have to. You won’t believe it if you won’t see it with your own eyes.”

The woman walked away from the desk in the direction of the Magazijn. Cassandra decided to follow her. She was wondering what the woman meant. Was it a mystery? Did she find something she was not supposed to find?

They walked down the stairs, then past the many bookcases towards the far corner of the spacious basement. Cassandra wondered how the woman knew which way to go. They turned the corner, and then... there was nothing. No body. No girl. No blood. Not even a tiny speck of blood.

“How? Why isn’t there...?” said Cassandra.

“This library has many secrets...” said the woman, “You must be wondering what this all is. Come upstairs and have a cup of tea with me, and I’ll tell you everything.”