



Dream of Travel Writing

What is and What is Not a Salable Non-Fiction Book Today: Finding Your Place in the Marketplace

Now, we're gonna be talking about nonfiction books. And I'm gonna be telling you over the course of this webinar why I'm so excited about them in terms of what they can do for you.

But I know that many of you have also thought about doing books. I, in fact, just earlier today, had a coaching call with the gentleman that I coach who is working on... actually, his book is finished right now. And we're just working on the marketing plan for it. I mean, since I've started looking at books as a viable thing to add to your writing literature, I have had several people that I know have gone through getting an agent writing the book from scratch, working with a publisher, had it come out in the lack of years. It does not take long. And I think a lot of what you hear about book publishing taking a long time comes from the fiction side. It comes from novels. And that's because when you write fiction, when you write a novel, you have to write the whole thing first and have it all done. And that's just done. But good enough, as perfect enough as you can get it that somebody else gets interested in it. But then what happens is once someone else gets interested in it, that person rips it apart with their own viewpoint of what should it be and you're rewriting and you're rewriting. And it's not uncommon for somebody's first novel to take 12 years. And that's not even always just people's first novel.

So what happens with nonfiction books, which is so different, and this is why it's a really cool thing to add to your arsenal of what you're working on, is that you do not write the book first. Now, this webinar is gonna be all about figuring out what the idea for your book should be. But your next step is not to write the book. It is to write the book proposal. And, in fact, all the webinars that we're doing in this current series are about putting together different pieces of that book proposal. And I'm approaching them in a kind of different order. You'll usually see them presented on various websites. If you look up how to write a nonfiction book or how to do a nonfiction book proposal, you'll see them presented in a much more let's call it ordered version in terms of the way that things appear either in your book proposal or somebody's idea of... It sounds like it makes sense that first you should find an agent and then you should know. What we're gonna talk about in this series is the most efficient, not just in terms of you taking the least time because you're doing things in an order but in terms of doing things in the right order, in the order that makes sure that you do not have to go back and redo your work any more times than it is already necessary in this multi revision oriented process.

So the big, big difference between nonfiction books and fiction books is that when you sell a nonfiction book, you sell it from a proposal, which is based on a certain number of sections. We'll get into this in a lot more detail in next week's webinar in terms of the order of the sections and what they are, what they all do. But you sell it from this proposal that can be anywhere from 20 to say 60 pages as opposed to this 350 pages of your book. And this



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happens for the exact same reason that you are selling articles to magazines based on pitches rather than on the completed piece so that you are not wasting time of writing something that someone's not gonna be able to publish and that your editor or the agent comes first or the people editing your work in terms of before the book goes out into the hands of the myriad readers that you're gonna have some day. Then those people are not having to tear apart something that you've spent years of your life on in order to put their input into it to have it the way that they know it needs to be to work in the marketplace and speak to your readers. They're able to co-create with you rather than come in like some disciplinarian telling you, "No, all these things that you did don't work."

So, I am even seeing...we're gonna talk about the different genres of nonfiction books in a little bit. But I'm even seeing in what's typically classed as memoir, which is really a first-person story of something that happened with some sort of life's lesson at the end. People always used to say that you have to sell memoir already written. And I'm even seeing a change in that. So if you have a book idea, I think you've been thinking about maybe that you've already worked a little bit on, do not feel like you have to spend the next three, five, however many years, slaving away on that before you can even know if somebody is interested in it or not. The proposal is the answer. But before the proposal, you need to know if that idea even fits in the marketplace. And that's what we're gonna look at today. So specifically, what I wanna go through in this webinar is...I talked a little bit about what's great about book ideas in terms of how they should fit into your repertoire, but I'm gonna talk more about that.

And then I'm gonna talk about something that you've heard me talk about before in terms of writing for magazines, but you may not have thought about in the book space, which is that you need to be infinitely more narrow than you think at least when you start. And then we're gonna talk about what's selling today. As in right now 2018 so far, what are the books that are going big? But then we're gonna look at the books that are going to be coming out in two years from now. There's a way to do that. You don't have to be in a publishing house. You don't have to pay \$2,000 a month. There's a very easy way to see the future of book publishing. And I'm gonna show you that and we're gonna look at it to look at what is going on specifically in the travel space.

For this month's or this four week series of webinars on book publishing, it's really important to know that just like you can go to journalism school and you can learn how to interview or how to put together a data journalism series or all sorts of different things these days, you're not gonna be learning how to pitch. If you do an MFA, if you do a traditional MFA, you're gonna be sitting in a lot of rooms with a lot of other writers with a lot of emotions critiquing each other's work. You're gonna be doing a lot of reading. You're gonna be doing a lot of



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thinking. You're gonna be doing a lot of uncomfortable stuff. But you're not gonna be learning about how to get your book into the market. And that's what we're gonna do in this webinar. So first and foremost, there's like a slight irony here if you think about it between the fact that I'm all about you guys having sustainable lives and earning the most money possible for your time and then I'm talking about books, which seem like they take forever. They don't really sell. How do these two things fit together?

Now, on the surface...and we're gonna see this when we go look in this website that I was telling you about later where you can see all of the books that are gonna be coming into the market later. But on the surface, I wonder if you guys have a sense of how much you can get paid as an advance for your book. So if you know anything about books and you are on the webinar live and you wanna throw that in the chat box, go ahead. I'm really curious. But the idea of an advance, you may have heard this word if you're already into books. But if not, I just wanna explain exactly the economics of how books work.

So, when you as an author wanna have a book come out through a traditional publishing model, your first step is to get an agent. And your agent's job, it's kind of better again to go back to sports to think of them like a manager because they do those kind of things that you might think of an athlete's manager doing. They don't just put you out there, but they do negotiations for you. They find opportunities for you. They do actually the finances of making sure that you're getting paid. They met all of the money out from the different places. They do the currency exchange. They do the contracts. They have legal expertise to be reviewing those contracts, all of these things. So, your first step is to get an agent. And that agent is gonna take about 15% of whatever you earn.

Now, there's two things that you earn. So you see somebody who I know is involved in books has put in the chat box a pretty good number in terms of what your advance can be. And so there's two types of money you can get. That's the advance and the royalties. And what that means is that the advance is the money that you get before the book comes out into the market. It's typically kind of set up as a round number as in some number of thousands of dollars and it's paid out to in stages, sometimes three, sometimes four. But it's typically that you get something like a third on signing, a third on delivery of the entire manuscript, and a third on let's call it acceptance of the manuscript. You might also get some on the publication day as well. And then some places might have different ways that they split that up.

So you might be getting let's say a low number, which should be \$10,000. You might be getting a \$10,000 advance for your book in which you're gonna get \$2,500 right away and then another 2,500 when you turn it in and then another 2,500 when it's accepted and then



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another 2,500 when it comes out say. Okay. Now, when your book is sold, every book that's sold, a piece of that comes sort of back to you. But what happens is that since the publisher advanced you money, they paid you money in advance, that money that comes back that's your portion needs to kind of go in a little fund until it exceeds the amount that the editor already advanced you, and then you start to get money for every book. And that's called royalties. Now, how much people earn in royalties or if you even hit the point of earning royalties is different for everybody. But you could say that you probably earn somewhere around...as a person, as the author, you probably earn around \$3.00 out of every book. Just for your understanding of how many books you need to sell in order to earn out on these advances and earn out is the term for when you hit the amount of your advance and then you start to earn the royalties. So a pretty, let's call it ungenerous advance from a publisher these days would be \$5,000 or maybe \$10,000.

In the publishing world, they think of those as let's just take it and see what happens. Those are books where they think that absolutely no money might come in off of that book. But they also think that...and if it does come in, then you'll just start getting royalties. And that's great for you and that's great for them. So the difference in getting a small advance is more about the way that the publishing house views your book. If they view your book as a, "Oh, well, we'll just throw some money at it book," they're not gonna do very much in the marketing of it. But when you hear about book marketing...we're gonna talk way more about this in upcoming webinar. But I just want you to understand a little bit for this money perspective of how things work internally. When you hear about book marketing, you might be thinking about doing book signings or having your book perhaps promoted on the radio or doing a TV show. But there's a lot of things that editors are involved in paying for in the book marketing. They even are paying to get you on that first table that people see when they walk into Barnes & Nobles. But that's the late part of the process.

In the book industry, every publisher has sort of a catalog that they put out. And where your book even shows up in that catalog or how much space it gets in that catalog is important because that catalog goes out to book stores. That catalog is also used for a sales conference that they have for their internal salespeople who are the ones responsible for taking meetings at Barnes & Nobles and independent bookstores all over the country and trying to get your book into those stores. So if you have one of these let's just throw some money at it advances, which might sound kind of cool to you to get \$10,000 for your book, you are gonna be bearing the brunt of the responsibility for making that book any more successful than you just getting that \$10,000 advance. So it depends what your goal is. And one goal that you can have when it comes to the books is to be known as an author and to be able to put that in your bio when you are pitching magazines. So if all you want is to have a book to your name and to be able to say, "I am the author of blah, blah, blah from HarperCollins or from Penguin or from Hachette or one of the big publishing houses or just any publishing



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house, it is exceedingly easy to do that because editors are looking for these, “Oh, I’ll just throw a little money at it books.” They are because they have to have different types of books in their portfolio as well. Okay?

So, a very small amount of money, which Lyndsey hit the needle on the head or whatever it is, hit the needle on the...nail on the head. There we go, not needle in the haystack, in the chat box is \$10,000. So you can get that amount of money as a throwaway amount of money that the publisher doesn’t even care about and get to have a book come out through traditional publisher. But you can also get a “normal advance or a healthy advance,” which would be more like \$30,000 or \$50,000 without that much more work. So that means, if you’re getting paid a third at a time, when you first sign that contract, you get that agent and then that agent gets you that book deal, you are getting \$10,000 plus in a check right there right at the beginning to pay you to spend the time to write that book. And this is why nonfiction books are the best because you have this idea.

You check out the marketplace. We’re gonna talk about how to do all of this in this series. You make sure it fits. You make sure that everything is lined up exactly how publisher wants to do it. You get that agent. That agent gets a publisher for you and then you can get a very nice check for five figures right off the bat. But like I said, the real dividends here are having that book associated with your name going forward, being able to say that you are the author of X, being able to say that in your pitches, on your bio, on your website, in all of these different places because having a book to your name immediately establishes you, first of all, just as a person who has a stamp of being approved by a source of curated writing information.

But secondly, it establishes you or can be used to establish you as the go-to person for whatever that book is about. So somebody that I work with has a really interesting book idea around Japan that we’ve been talking about. And she has moved from Japan back to where she’s from, but she would like to keep writing about Japan. So this is the kind of thing where she can use that book. She’s already got the years that she was living there. But she can use that book to position herself as the expert on visiting this particular type of thing in Japan even though she doesn’t live there anymore. Okay. Let’s say for instance I’m here in Colombia right now. I’m sitting in Medellin, which is like a big expat kind of capital of Colombia. Colombia is an interesting place. This is something that’s only come on the mainstream tourism radar quite recently if you would even say that they’re getting mainstream tourists here or so I think more of them are going to Peru. And it’s an interesting place. It’s an interesting place in terms of the modernity of the sort of neighborhood that I’m in. It’s an interesting place in terms of the history of Pablo Escobar. There’s so many different things that you could choose if you live in Medellin or know Medellin well that you could



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choose to focus on to write a book and then be positioned as the expert on this burgeoning tourism area. Okay?

So, it's great to look at books that are not only things that you could easily write but things that set you up for what you want to continue to do. But the thing is your book needs to be one book, not an encyclopedia. Your book, even though it's nonfiction and even though it may be service oriented as it may have advice or tips or information, your book will work so much better if it has a singular story attached to it. And I'm gonna show you. We're gonna pop over in a couple minutes and look at the books this year that are selling really well and you'll see this particularly in practice. But to sort of drive this point home and the fact that it's not new, well, storytelling is kind of a buzzword these days even though storytelling has been around for 3,000 years. This idea of sticking to specific stories and the books that you write has worked very well for a number of very successful and well-known travel and sort of food culture writers over the years. So I just pulled...there was so many more that I could pull and I was just like...every time I kind of started writing when I think of some more. But I've pulled a few writers over for us to look at here.

So Jan Morris is very much talked about in circles of I would call it more...I don't wanna just say older, but I would say travel writers who are...I would say even 45 plus tend to think of Jan Morris and know Jan Morris's lovely writing. If you don't know her already, I really recommend you read some of her stuff. It's really beautiful. She also does a lot of essays and different types of things. But you'll see here...and Jan Morris's list now and Wales is misspelled there. Sorry about that. Jan Morris's list, and this is just curated because she's written so many books. Her books are very specific geographically but they're also often quite specific time wise. So you see she has one that's a "South African Winter." She has one that's just about a market in one place. She has one called the "Venetian Bestiary." She has one called the "Sultan in Oman." So her books aren't just about a place but then they're also about something about that place.

And then there's Tim Cahill who is also definitely sort of himself an older writer but I think also his books...I don't know but he's had too many come too recently. But he was a founding editor of Outside Magazine, which is known for its really, really amazing writing. And you'll notice with his book titles with the exception of "Lost in My Own Backyard" and kind of the second to last one as well, there tends to be kind of this theme. He writes about adventure travel. So he's got, "Jaguars," "Ducks," "Wolverine," "Butterworms." He's got this kind of animal oriented themes in his books, but that's because each of these books is kind of about a specific instance, a specific journey, and in a specific place. So he's not looking to write you a history of everything that's happened in Kathmandu. He's not even looking to write you a guide to Kathmandu. He's looking to tell you his specific and personal story of a



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particular adventure travel trip and the calamities that ensued in...I don't think there's anyone here that are particularly in Kathmandu but in various places like that in Yellowstone, for instance.

Now, somebody who takes a slightly different tack but is quite well known and that's why I put him in here is another gentleman, Bill Bryson. And Bill Bryson is American but have been living in Britain for a long time. His family is there and so he wrote actually several books on Britain, notably "Notes from a Small Island." And it's important to look at here that even though he does sometimes write books that are about a whole country such as Britain one is "Notes from a Small Island." "Notes from a Big Country" is about the US. "In a Sunburned Country" is about Australia. "The Lost Continent" I believe is about South America. "The Palace Under the Alps," that's kind of a larger one about Europe. Even though he does take on these larger places, there's always a more specific lens through which he is looking at it. So "The Palace Under the Alps," for instance, is about Europe but it's about...I think it's like 200 or so very unusual landmarks. Okay. "Notes from a Small Island" is him working his way through Britain but in a very real time oriented way, noting what he's seeing as he goes through, as he goes by. And in some cases, he's giving you some larger history or some demographics, ethnographic, psychographics, different things like that. But it's more about what is happening to him on one journey even though it's through this large place.

Now, I have another one in here whose books are more food oriented. But I wanted to put him in because he's a really good example of this idea of specificity. So Michael Pollan, also a journalist, also writes essays, also a lot of different things. He is quite known for a few of the books on this list. But the ones that I think you might not perhaps know quite as well are these two, "Cooked" and "Botany of Desire" that are really specific. And that's one of the reasons that I wanted to mention them is that some of the books that he's written like "Food Rules" and the "Omnivore's Dilemma" are really almost tomes of...you might wanna call it manifestos a little bit. "Omnivore's Dilemma" has quite a bit reporting. But "Food Rules" is quite more manifesto-oriented. And in "Cooked" and "Botany of Desire," what he does in both books is that he splits the books into four sections. "Botany of Desire" is about four different plants: marijuana, apples, orchids. And I can't remember the last one. And "Cooked" is about four different types of cooking. So I believe there's cooking over fire, fermenting, boiling, and then another one that I can't remember. And each of his books, each of those two books is completely split into these four sections. But he's using those four sections to build a larger story and a larger trend. So there's just two more authors I wanna show you guys too.

So, one is another kind of very, very classic travel writer of the book variety, and his name is Pico Iyer. And you'll see here again, Kyoto, Cuba, Kathmandu, "Falling off the Maps: Some



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Lonely Places around the World.” And then he gets into these ones. They’re not even exactly about traveling. They’re kind of about the concept of travel through some different places. So he has the “Art of stillness: Adventures in Going Nowhere,” and “The Global Soul: Jet Lag, Shopping Malls, and the Search for Home.” Now, even though these are not about a specific place, they’re very specific in terms of what they are focusing on. Another gentleman whose books are more recent that some of you may be familiar with is J. Maarten Troost here with “The Sex Lives of Cannibals,” which is really good if you’re trying to write a nonfiction narrative book for the first time like something that you’ve experienced yourself and you’re trying to figure out about how to break up the different chapters and how to do plotting. I really recommend the beginning of his “Sex Lives of Cannibals” book for that, but his are all of this variety going somewhere with people that most Western people don’t understand well and figuring them out. Okay. So there’s the South Pacific Islands. It’s China. There’s a lot of South Pacific Islands in here. And then he even has one where he travels to a theme park which is meant to be from the future.

So, as you saw no doubt in some of these books, there tends to be a couple different types of first-person writing that are more prevalent than others. Now, as I mentioned, you can kind of call a lot of things memoirs if there’s a first person involved. There’s a lot of other different types of names that you can use for them. So I’ve broken things out a little bit. But as you notice particularly for instance with Tim Cahill, it also happens with Jim Maarten Troost and a little bit of Pico Iyer as well and even Bill Bryson, it’s very common just as it is in future articles for people to set out a quest for themselves. They’re going to visit every country in this...every state in the country. Alice Cheryl Strayed, they’re gonna walk the Pacific Trail. Elizabeth Gilbert, she’s gonna go to these three countries and she’s gonna pursue what is it like gluttony, spirituality, and balance. So this idea of a quest in which you’re narrowly sticking to what’s happening in real time and what’s important for the reader to understand the real time in terms of background and no other background besides that, that’s a very common type of book. And the other really lovely thing about those is that you may have already gone on said quests and then be pitching the book, but you can also pitch the book before the quests and get the quest paid for. And that is the holy grail of nonfiction narrative book advances, my friends.

Now, the next thing that you can look at if you’re somebody who thinks of yourself as a set anymore or let’s call it analytical or service-oriented writer is this idea of trends, not trending. We’re gonna talk about that in a second but of trends. So this might be, for instance, I’m not sure if there’s a really good mass-market book on digital nomadism. I’m not sure. I don’t know if there’s a good traditionally published book on this that has really explained what it is and the rise and all these things to the mass marketplace to the general public. So that would be a trend in travel. Another trend in travel that I haven’t seen a great book published on yet



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is the rise of food tours or experiential travel. What is that really? Why do you care? Where did it come from? Why? Those are trends.

So anything that you see kind of brewing, don't just assume that somebody else has written the book on that. You can be the one. You can do the interviews. You can do the research and you can be the one who positioned yourself as the expert on that topic by writing a book about it. Now, another one that's really cool, and you'd see kind of the mix of quests in this with J. Maarten Troost specifically, is reporting on fascinating unknown people or subcultures. And Jan Morris does this in a really lovely way as well with a lot of her books on Venice and Trieste and so many other places, is to take...you can take a country. You can take a period in that country's history. You can take a famous person from there and to do it in more of whether it's a biography or kind of a more reported-oriented look at that person or those people's and their significance and tell their story.

Now, some of the other ones that I have on here are not necessarily ones that I think that you guys are gonna write, but they're selling quite well today. And you're gonna see this as we skip over to the list on Esquire of the best nonfiction narrative books of 2018. So comedy memoirs, so these are like comedians who are essentially writing a memoir, but it's more about their voice. The one that Tina Fey did about being a boss I think was really kind of one of the big first ones in this area. Also drug memoirs seem to always do well. Sometimes the trends shifted there about recovery. Sometimes they're sort of shocking us, sometimes they're rock and roll, but those always do well. And essays have made a comeback.

Now, I'm not necessarily sure that I would recommend essays as a first time out type book to people, but essays are making a very big comeback. They used to be something that editors and agents would really shudder if someone tried to pitch them and now there's a lot more interest in that. And then the other thing that you're seeing a lot of is these very ripped from the headline type topics.

So let me switch over to this other window where we're gonna look at both the Esquire list and also we're gonna look at this place where you can see the books of the future like J. Maarten Troost and going to the theme park of the future.

But this list is from Esquire. It's the top 50 nonfiction books of 2018 so far. I was calling it narrative nonfiction book, so they've technically called it nonfiction books. But pretty much every book on here is narrative more or less as you'll see as we go through. So we have a few kind of outliers. This interesting true story about schizophrenia one is a little bit of an outlier. But you'll see that a lot of them fit into these trends that I was talking to you about. So this is



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“Dispatches from the Border.” So this is really touching on both a subgroup and ripped from the headlines, “Black Lives Matter” memoirs, ripped from the headlines, “I’ll be Gone in the Dark: One Woman’s Obsessive Search for the Golden State Killer.” Again, it’s become really trendy these sort of true crime things. Here’s one of a quest of somebody going into the Wu-Tang clan and coming part of it. We’ve got a trend piece how women are revolutionizing television, not a trend piece rather but a trend book. We’ve got a subgroup one, “The Wisdom of Wolves: Lessons from the Sawtooth Pack.” We’ve got “Everything is Wonderful and Horrible, “Horrible and Wonderful,” a tragic comic memoir, so from the writer of “Parks and Recs,” one of those comedy memoirs, again, just the funny part. It’s one of those comedy memoirs.

This is really one of those ripped from the headlines ones. It’s about the town where they took down all the Confederate statues. I’m not gonna go through all of them now, but I’m just kind of go through to show you the specific ones that I wanted to show you now. So some of these like I said very ripped from the headlines. That’s something that’s not gonna go away. It’s becoming a much, much bigger trend than it used to be. But there’s some really lovely interesting ones in here as well. This one is a book of essays which is really wonderful and from a really great writer, Alexander Chee, that I met recently. But there’s also one...let’s hold on. Now the website is still launching. There’s also ones that are very much not tied to the stature of the person writing it that I really wanna bring your attention. So this is a really lovely one that falls into that category of taking a sort of unknown or popularly unknown or sort of lesser-known person or subgroup and showing how they’ve really made a difference in a lot of things that we know or a lot of people that we know. So this is a tailor who dressed Bianca Jagger, John and The Beatles.

Now, there’s one that I’m looking for for you guys here as you’ll see lots of different headlines more about lies in Silicon Valley startups. But there’s one that I really wanna show you, which I was really happy to see on this list which was...here we go, “Chesapeake Requiem: A year with the Watermen of Vanishing Tangier Island.” So this is an island off of Virginia where both the people are vanishing and the economy is vanishing and also the water erosion is happening. And this is the kind of thing that I hear so many of you guys telling me that you’ve found people like this in your travel. You’ve found people who just have a fascinating story to tell who their story touches on the sense of place. It touches on some larger trends of globalism and environmentalism, different things like this. These make excellent amazing book pitches, you guys. And so I really want you to know that not only are these books out there but that to be the person that tells that story, you really don’t need much more background, much more skills, much more proving yourself than you already have. You just have to do the research and show that your writing is up to snuff and that you’re gonna put it together. Okay?



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So I'm not sure if there's another one in here that I wanted to show you. There's some really lovely books, but I don't think there's anything else in particular on this list that we really needed to see. This one is kind of an interesting first-person one. And those are like I said, ones that are a lot easier to sell now than they used to be. But you have to have a really incredible story. And to that point, there's one woman who has been a writer for several years and she wrote this book that's gone off very well. And she wrote about having Lyme disease. And this is something where she got really lucky in terms of ripped from the headlines plus her first person memoir because this is something that she struggled with for a really long time. But Lyme disease is largely in the news right now. So if you have something that's first-person, you might have several ideas that you've had once upon time of like, "Oh, ha-ha, I could write a book about this." People tell you that at dinner parties, right? Watch for when it becomes timely. That's the best time to pitch that particular book. So how do you know what's timely aside from scanning the headlines periodically? That brings us to Publishers Marketplace.

So any of you who are on the call today, you're listening to the call after the fact who have thought about writing a book, have, I hope heard about this. But I want to show you guys not just what this incredible resource is but also how you can use it to figure out what your book should and should not be. So Publishers Marketplace, very much in brief, is like a clearinghouse of information about the publishing industry in several ways. So there's headlines, and you can sign up for a free newsletter. They call it Publishers Marketplace Lunch or something like that. You can sign up for a free newsletter from them where you're gonna get kind of a list of headlines and also a list of some of the deals that are being done. But you can also pay I think it's just about 25, maybe 29 bucks per month to get a membership to this and really just peruse the crap out of it for when you really need to dig in and do the research and then you just turn it off when you're done. Okay?

So what they deal in here besides aggregating the headlines is that they'll...and besides listing jobs is that they...well, first of all, they really do a lot of things like they list this week's most visited pages including most visited blogs. Okay? So, what they do best, the one here, what you're gonna get from here that you're not gonna be able to get anywhere else is not the stuff that you're seeing on the first page. It's once you get in, you have the ability to search and find anything you want. I pulled up this search. I just put in travel because I want you to see some things here. So for instance, you can get direct email addresses for all the editors, like literally all of the editors. The thing though is that you shouldn't be pushing your book directly to editors. You should be going to an agent, but you can get email addresses for them as well and you can also figure out which agent you should target in here as well. But I'm trying to think if anyone...I don't wanna put somebody's book idea in here who's not on the call. Okay. I don't know any nonfiction book ideas left up my head for anybody who's on



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the call today. So I will make one up. But let's say, for instance, you want to write a book about let's say Colombia.

So let's look for travel and Colombia. And I'm spelling it wrong, Colombia. Okay? So what you can do in Publishers Marketplace is that you can see every book that touches on these topics that has been sold to a publishing house recently. So I put in travel and Colombia. So that's gonna narrow the field a little bit. I could have just put in Colombia, but we got two that one quite recently and one a little bit further in the past. So the one that's more passed is by a public speaker and author called "Where am I Eating" in which she travels the globe, again, quest piece to work and fish alongside the farmers and fishermen tasked with feeding the American appetite. So it's a quest to figure out where our food comes from. And here's another one, "The Adventures of Alexander Von Humboldt." So this is a New York Times best-selling historian and he is writing ding-ding-ding about a specific very interesting person who's not well known to history and about that person's life journey and what the big takeaways are. So in this case, it's a scientist explorer who crossed the Andes on foot walking from Colombia to Peru canoeing down the Orinoco encountering electric eels and Jaguars and culminating with his visits in 1804 to Thomas Jefferson in Washington.

Okay? So these are two of those types of books that I told you about before, taking a specific person or subculture and taking something trending. In 2011, where was our food coming from was a huge, huge trend. So let's say that you...I opened this over here. I just put in travel, just travel, only the word travel, nothing else. And I wanted to show you guys all of the deals that are being done for books that involve travel. Okay? So here we've got...this is a person who...if you see rights sale, it means that the book wasn't sold to a publisher but that the book has already been bought but they're selling the rights to a different country. Okay? So this is somebody who is a short story writer and a novelist. And this is actually a novel that has a travel angle to it.

And you'll actually be surprised how many of these you see when you look in here. Here's another one, the tenth Kate Shackleton mystery featuring the eponymous sleuth who travels to the opening of the new Bronte Museum. So I could go in here, and I could filter. See, I'm gonna take this out. So I'm gonna take out all the fictions and now we're just seeing fiction and then we're gonna search again so that we're not seeing the fiction travel pieces. But it's important to see those as well, guys, because if you're pitching something that's nonfiction and narrative and there's a fiction story that's already out there or already being sold that's quite similar, that's still gonna create a disconnect for you in terms of having to make sure that your book is different from other people's books.



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So as you're looking here, and like I said, I just put in travel for us because I wanted us to get an overview sense of what's being published. If you're looking in here and trying to figure out what kind of book can you do should you do, there's several different ways to go about it. So you can read through just for inspiration the same way that I advise people who are new to working with magazines do in the Travel Magazine database. You can look like I just entered that travel and Colombia search to see what else is being published very narrowly about your topic. You can look and see what else is being published more broadly about your topic and then discover where you fit in from there. So I'm gonna look through these and then I also wanna go back to that Colombia search and put in just Colombia instead of travel and Colombia and see what's coming up for Colombia in nonfiction so we can get a sense of that. So looking at this more overall travel search, we've got, again, many of these interestingly similar types of books that I told you about. You really can't go wrong with those styles of books that I showed you. They are the ones that sell right now.

So here's Hemingway's great-granddaughter talking about "Ernest's Way: An International Guide to Hemingway's Travels," what a cool book idea and just the perfect person to do it. So this can give you the idea of like what other people may I be connected to that I can do this kind of thing about? You probably know if you're Ernest Hemingway's great-granddaughter, but who knows who else might be a big person in a different industry that might be an interesting person for you to do such a book about? So contributing editor of Hometown Pasadena, Mary Lea Carroll's "St. Everywhere: Travels with Lady Saints," with inspirational stories of the author's side trips to learn about the great women saints whenever and wherever she travels. "Home Sick," a Man Booker Prize winners, illustrated memoir about the dangers of empathy and thrills of world travel chronicling her childhood in Oklahoma and her desperate search for ways to run away from home through photography, foreign languages, and more, very straight memoir, right, guys?

Now, here's another one that's more of this profile variety, ultrarunner and world traveler. Actually, this one's a profile again or a memoir again. Ultrarunner and world traveler, Rickey Gates's untitled book, chronicling through photos and stories, his unsupported 3,500 mile run across the continental United States. "Roam" by Maggie Downs, travel and lifestyle writer Maggie Downs's "Roam: The Trip of my Dying Mother's Lifetime," which details the journalist trip around the world to complete her dying mother's bucket list and how the journey led her to bigger adventures sending her in Egypt during the Arab Spring and traveling across Africa, Asia, and South America. So that is a very quest-oriented piece. This one, I have seen this one before, and I think this is really interesting. "Judy Garland Slept Here," celebrity interviewer, Alan Petrucelli's "Judy Garland Slept Here: The Country's Campiest, Kitschiest, and Most Important Gay Attractions to See Before You Die," an informal, entertaining, one-of-a-kind travel guide focusing on some of the more iconic queer-friendly sights, destinations, and attractions in America.



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Here's another one which is this kind of combination of something that the author did with some general knowledge. Suzanne Kamata's "Squeaky Wheels: Travels with my Daughter by Train, Plane, Metro, Tuk-Tuk and Wheel Chair, part comparative culture study, part mother and daughter travel memoir about multicultural and multilingual adventures with her teen, a dual citizenship artist who happens to be deaf with cerebral palsy through suburban Tennessee to the islands of Japan to the top of the Eiffel Tower and ultimately to independence. So here, we're touching on a trend is accessible travel coupled with this memoir, coupled with telling you about cultures, all sorts of different things. It seems like she's touching on a lot of things. But it seems to be more through a type of quest oriented lens.

She's narrowed down to the story of her author of her daughter gaining independence. I'm just gonna look at a couple more in here, but I hope that some of these are giving you guys ideas of like, "Well, crap, like I thought about writing a blog about that, but I never thought I could just write a book about that. Wouldn't that be so much easier and have success quicker and give me money and then make me more position to have an actual blog about that?" So here's another one, travel writer Tory Bilski's "Horses of the Midnight Sun: A Travel Memoir of Iceland" recounting her 12 summers at a horse farm in Thingeyrar, a windswept place of haunting, desolate beauty, run by Helga, an Icelandic horse whisperer.

She spends a week each year with a group of kindred female souls, all of whom are besotted with Icelandic horses, love of places, wild rides, growing friendships, and unexpected adventures each year bring about a discovery of self for the author. Now, this one, "Bourdain," very much touching in a trend as well, very biography oriented. So I'm gonna skip down to a couple more that I think are a little more apropos to the type of books that we would be writing. So here. This one is a great one. Journalist and food stylist Hannah Kirchner's "Foreign Woman Works in Sake Bar," a travel memoir exploring craft, culture, and purpose alongside the masters and artisans of the Japanese mountain village, Yamanaka.

How many of you guys, and I mean, I know for a lot of you guys but how many of you in your travels have been somewhere, whether it's for a month or a year or more or less where you've got to really know some super specific and interesting subculture? Let's see if there's a couple other ones here to share with you guys quickly. And then I'll look over like I said in this other tab. I'm going to do a different search rather than doing travel and Colombia. I'm gonna just look for Colombia. And I wanna also show you guys how it works to figure out the agents from here. So here's a good one, another two good ones that I wanted to show you.



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So author of “The New Paris,” American ex-pat in Paris and journalist for New York Times, Conde Nast Traveler, and Fortune magazine’s Lindsay Tramuta’s “The New Parisiennes,” lifting the veil on the myth of Parisian women, profiling them as they truly are in all their diversity and complexity, arguing that Paris is blooming into a cultural center of feminine power that backs tradition with an appendix that features the new Parisiennes’ favorite cultural institutions, spots for wellness and mindfulness, shops, parks, artistic venues, cocktails bars, places of worship, women owned businesses, classes, and more.

So things like this, even if you’re like, “Well, I don’t write for Conde Nast Traveler and the New York Times,” things like this show you what the editors will buy, what agents will be interested in even if you’re not that person. And interestingly enough, I can tell you because I know the advantage that you get from this place that this is a smaller press and that this person with her and like inordinate background as a journalist could have probably gotten herself a bigger deal with this book as well. So this here. This one I’m just zeroing in on because of two things, which is one is that I know this person because this book is lovely. It was co-written by her and a chef that I know and also because **chaat is an ancestry [SP] food and I love** it so much. But here, I’m just wanna share two more from here and then we’re gonna talk about agents in the second.

So Nashville chef and restaurateur and judge of the Food Network Program “Chopped,” Maneet Chauhan and food and travel writer and “North” author, Jody Eddy’s “The Chaat Express,” a travelogue cookbook that will journey my train along the iconic Indian rail system to explore the diverse regional street foods of the vast nation. That is the kind of thing that somebody should pitch for here for the US. There’s so many different ideas like this that you can take out of Publishers Marketplace and just say, “Wow, I mean, I should just do that here.”

So here’s “Eat Like a Local: France,” a guide showing travelers how to shop in specialty stores and prepare simple yet delicious local recipes with the limited equipment of a rental kitchen, along with stories about French, food, culture. So what happens if you see one of these and you’re like, “Okay, yeah, like I really like this idea. I don’t wanna write a book exactly like that, but I love this book idea.” What you should always do is you should check the bottom here. It says sold to Nina Shield at Tarcher Perigee. This is the editor at the publishing house, by. Now, this person is the agent that represents that author. Let me get you a couple other ones by Janis and by Rica. So when you’re in Publishers Marketplace and you click on any of these, then you get to the page for the agent, and here, you can see what types of books this agent represents. And you can also get the agent’s email address and you can also get the link to find out what types of things editor wants. You can find out how to pitch them and you can see...I’m hoping that some of these are on here. Hold on.



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You can actually see how big of an advance the author has received. So here you see it says, “In a good deal.” That good is actually a sign of how much money has been made in this deal. Let me see if I can...I remember I saw this recently. Hold on. Let me cue this up for you guys. There’s a way where you can see how big the deal is just by these little words. They say in a good deal, in a great deal, in a nice deal. And those things all tell you about the size of the deal. Now, a couple other things I’m seeing are at auction and at a preempt. These, unfortunately, don’t tell you the size of the deal. But usually if you see either of those two words, it means it was for a quite a lot of money. So what you can do is not only use this resource to find agents that you might wanna reach out to, to find what books are being published and see what type of thing might make sense for you to be pitching as well and to see which agents you wanna pitch those things to, but you can also figure out which...I’m trying to see if I can find this on here. You can find out which...oh, shoot. I’m sorry. I can’t find you the size of this. But you can find out which agents are actually earning the most money for their clients. Is that insane?

So I’m just gonna show you one person in particular who I know has a number of these deals so that you can see how it works.

With the deal sizes, what happens is that the different numbers or the different sort of code words like I said, they all lead to different size deals. But there’s also a place on any particular agent’s page where you can see how many six-figure deals they’ve come across as well. So if you are really like, “Okay. I wanna do this book, but I need to be able to get an advance off of it that will allow me to pay for my family, to pay for my living while I’m working on this book, and I can be able to do both things at once,” you can click this little button here or you can just check the numbers and see how many six-figure deals this agent has done. And that helps you in a way that so many writers don’t think about. They just think, “Oh, what agent might be interested in me? What agent might take me?” But as you can see from this list that we were looking at of...here it is. No, where did it go? Of all of these different books, all of these different deals being done about travel, there are so many agents out there publishing books about travel.

There are so many publishing houses publishing books about travel that you wanna position yourself to get the best deal that you’re gonna get. And you do that first by making sure that you have an idea that fits into the types of things that are being bought. And like I said, some of them are ripped from the headlines, GOOP contributor. Here’s somebody who is a canine Instagram superstar. How can you align your idea with something that’s ripped out of the headlines? Or if you can’t, how can you align that with an interesting person or subgroup and do it by biography style? And then you look. You click on all these agents and you see who is doing well, who has the six-figure deals, who has the nice deals, who has the good deals. And



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then you go through and you say Colombia. Who is doing Columbia? And you look through and you check out all these deals. Here's 30 deals. Find every single agent who has recently sold a book about this or maybe I don't wanna look just about the place. Maybe I wanna look about culture or maybe I wanna look for biographies of cultural groups or whatever that is. And all you do is you throw it in here and you say, "Great, 35 deals. Let me go through here and pull out every agent, list those deals and that's who I'm gonna pitch my book to."

So thank you guys so much for joining me today and I look forward to chatting with you more next week.