

The Author's ADVOCATE

Special Newsletter

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“How I got on ‘Oprah’—a dream come true!!!” Infinity author Terry Shulman shares his “Oprah” experience at 5th Annual Authors’ Conference and Book Fair Sheraton Park Ridge at Valley Forge, PA, October 29 – 31, 2004

One of the most frequently shared dreams of newly published authors is to appear on “Oprah.” This dream came true for Infinity author Terry Shulman when his guest appearance was televised on Tuesday, September 21, 2004. The following morning I phoned Terry to congratulate him and asked him to write about how this happened for publication in the newsletter, and then I invited him to attend our conference and tell the whole story about how his dream came true.

LIFE AFTER BEING ON OPRAH

By Terry Shulman

It's the day after my guest spot on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* aired. I was an expert on shoplifting addiction for the show on "Secret Lives." My book, published in 2003 by **Infinity Publishing**, is *Something for Nothing: Shoplifting Addiction and Recovery*. Did you know that 1 out of 11 people in America shoplift? Nearly 25 million Americans take the three-finger discount!

I am still pinching myself. Several people have asked me: How'd you do it? How'd you get on Oprah? After seven years of on-and-off writing and having been turned down by fifty publishers, **Infinity Publishing** helped me realize my dream in November 2003. The book is finally what put me over the top! My book is what made me an expert in the eyes of the world. Plain and simple.

I got the *Oprah Show's* attention shortly after my book was published. By grace, a colleague of mine was a best friend in college with a senior producer for Oprah. I mailed her the book. She was interested but cautioned me: Oprah receives about 1,000 story ideas a day. I did the math: Oprah's been on nearly 20 years; $20 \times 365 \times 1000 = 7,300,000$ story ideas pitched to Oprah. I started praying immediately for Winona Ryder to have a relapse! I believed my book was important. Three months later, another producer called me who was making a strong pitch for an end of the year show.

Meanwhile, I still had to go about my life—bills needed to be paid. I flew to Honolulu in late July—I know, tough life—to attend the **Annual American Psychological Association International Conference**. I brought my books, brochures, and business cards, determined to make contacts with people from across the globe. I was overwhelmed by the number of attendees—over 10,000—and the hundreds-upon-hundreds of seminars on every conceivable topic...except mine.

The day after my return, the phone rang. It was the *Oprah Show*. Over the next two weeks, I'd spend countless hours searching for a shoplifter who was willing to do the show. I knew many who could, but few who would. The producer wasn't even sure she would have me (or my book) on the show. Finally, I was able to get a woman shoplifter in recovery from the Philadelphia area (coincidentally,

the home place of **Infinity Publishing**). The producer decided I was going to be the expert after all and flew to Detroit to film me and the weekly shoplifters support group I founded, most of whose members have benefited from my book.

On Tuesday morning, August 24, my wife and I were flown into Chicago. We were picked up in a limo driven by a middle-aged balding man with whitish hair who smiled at the bottom of the airport escalator holding a sign with my last name on it. It was a rainy day, and we lounged at our Omni Hotel suite on the Magnificent Mile, taking a sauna, Jacuzzi and fine dining on Oprah's tab at the hotel restaurant. I ordered room service: a Russian massage therapist who worked her deep tissue magic on our tired bodies. We slept like babies that night.

The same limo driver picked us up the following morning at 7:30. I was relaxed and excited at the same time. At the studio, I had a quick makeup and hair check and by 9am my wife and I were escorted to the *big room*. I was seated in the front row with the other guests, my wife a few rows behind me. The energy in the room was electric.

When Oprah came out, it was just like you see on TV. Everyone jumped out of their seats and started screaming and applauding! Sure, we'd been coached but nobody really needed any coaching to cheer for Oprah. We would have done it anyway. *Everybody loves Oprah!*

Soon I would have my 15 minutes of fame (well, 6 minutes after editing). I sat on Oprah's beautiful yellow leather couch across from the host herself. The woman shoplifter, seated between us, gave an eloquent and heart-wrenching interview. Then, I took a deep breath, caught the eyes of my wife, and gave her a calm *thumbs up*. It's showtime! I was in the zone: relaxed, confident, enjoying and milking every minute of it. Oprah was so down to earth! She makes you feel real and important.

A jolt of thrilling satisfaction shot through me as Oprah mentioned my book title, and then the book cover flashed on the monitors for what seemed like

a mere moment that should have been frozen in time. As I watched my appearance on the *Oprah Show* yesterday, September 21, 2004—when the segment taped in August finally aired—it was as good as I remembered—maybe better, except my shirt collar stuck out of my suit coat a bit.

So, I did it! My book is out there in the world. Within one year of being published by **Infinity**, I really did it! Through the power of the book, lots of persistence, hard work, and a little (a lot) of patience and luck, I got on the *Oprah Show*. I hope you have a shot at this kind of success, too!

For the rest of the Oprah story...

...register for our conference because **Terry Shulman**, **Infinity** author of *Something for Nothing: Shoplifting Addiction and Recovery*, will be attending our 5th annual conference to share more details about his Oprah experience. He'll be autographing his "*as seen on Oprah*" book at the Sunday afternoon Book Fair at the Sheraton. Visit his website at: www.shopliftersanonymous.com

Now, I can hear some of you saying that Terry got to be a guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* only because his colleague knew a senior producer of the show. But how many other people know producers and still don't get on the air??? Opportunity alone will not get you on Oprah—or any other show for that matter. You also need a well written book, a timely hook, and at least four other elements to get on the air successfully. By attending our conference and talking one-on-one with the experts, you'll discover what these essential factors are for your book and how to have them working effectively to get more exposure.

Expanding your network of folks who know about your book increases your odds to connect with somebody, who knows someone, who has a friend in a position to promote your book big time. The personal contacts you make along the way sparkle with the opportunities to link referrals together to spotlight your book. Always have copies of your book and business cards close-at-hand whenever you attend a social function. *Think opportunities!!!*

IPPY Invitation for Entries

The ninth annual **Independent Publisher Book Awards**, conducted annually to honor the year's best independently published titles, is now accepting entries in 58 subject categories. All independent, university, small presses, and self-publishing authors who produce books intended for the North American market are eligible to enter titles copyrighted or released in 2004.

The **IPPY Awards** were conceived to bring increased recognition and credibility to the work of deserving independent authors and publishers. Award winners receive a variety of prizes and national publicity, yearlong promotion on the IndependentPublisher.com website, and an assortment of other marketing tools and opportunities.

Winners in each category receive trophies, two finalists receive certificates, and 5-10 semi-finalists per category receive honorable mention. A **cash prize of \$500** goes to each of ten Outstanding Books of the Year, in categories like "*Story Teller of the Year*" and "*Most Likely to Save the Planet*." Last year's contest attracted 2,069 books from over 1,300 publishers, and prizes were awarded to authors and publishers from 40 U.S. states and six Canadian provinces. Semi-finalists in each category will be announced to participants and the press on May 9th, 2005 and final results announcement and a gala awards presentation and media event that will take place during **Book Expo America (BEA)** in New York on June 3rd, 2005.

Infinity Publishing has made a special arrangement to assist our authors entering this contest. When you send your completed entry form and entry fee of **\$65 per title** to **Infinity**, then we will provide your book and ship it directly to them in a timely fashion. The **deadline is March 15, 2005**, however, entering early and often increases your odds—titles may be entered in more than one category by paying 2 entry fees and Infinity will send 2 copies of your book to **IPPY**.

For more information visit:
www.independentpublisher.com/baentry

Book-faults Foul Readers' Minds

Just like a foot-fault can foul you out of a game of tennis, typos and glaring goofs in your book can foul the minds of your readers. The reader's rewarding experience enjoying your thoughtful words is suddenly marred whenever there's a place out of word—ah, a word out of place!!!

Mistaken words can happen easily when you're writing a book. So many things to think about and remember, and maybe with all the wordsmithing pondering, some authors believe all the words will all sort of fit together just right and the punctuation marks will magically fall properly into place. That ain't gonna happen—no matter how good your spell-checker is or what grammar-fixer-upper program you're using.

We strive to make every Infinity book as error free as possible, but the truth is we can't change a single word without the author's okay. That's because the author owns all rights to his/her book—so only you can authorize changes. However, our optional proofreading/copyediting service provides the way for typos and goofs to be corrected on the author's submitted book file. When authors utilize our proofreading service, the proof copies of their books will have all the corrections made and ready for their approval.

Cathy Kessler is the manager of this program, and she has over a decade of proofing and editing experience. The cost of our in-house proofreading/copyediting service is a penny a word—complete details at: www.infinitypublishing.com

Cathy will be attending our conference in Valley Forge, PA, and she'll be available to meet individually with authors to discuss the editing options that are available to improve their books. She is especially interested in talking with Infinity authors about having a cleanup of goofs done on their existing book. Bring Cathy a copy of your published book, and during the conference, she'll be glad to give a quick evaluation based on her review of several sample pages.

“**HOLT UNCENSORED**” HAS SCORCHING REPORT ON OUTSOURCING AT **XLIBRIS**

“*Holt Uncensored*” is a widely read, free online column about books and the book industry written by former *San Francisco Chronicle* book editor and critic **Pat Holt**. Pat is noted for her outspoken opinions, her insightful observations on publishing trends, and her personal reflections comparing back when with the here and now. Methinks she could out ramble me on almost any topic.

In her September 22, 2004, column, Pat rightfully rambled-on—in excellent form—with an inspired passion about the many harmful woes caused by **Xlibris** outsourcing of jobs to **Pacific-rim** countries. Pat focuses on **Xlibris** for heartlessly downsizing their staff in the USA to increase their profits by paying for cheaper and inferior services offshore. She skillfully presents the layered multinational corporate structure of **Random House** owning **Xlibris** and **Bertelsmann**—the German owner of **Random House**—dictating corporate terms of profit or perish imposed with a mandate of effective-cost-effectiveness begets more profits.

According to Holt’s column, **John Feldcamp**, **Xlibris** CEO, implies that **Xlibris** can’t compete with other companies without outsourcing. She goes on to pointedly explain—in a way that even the thickest corporate mindset could understand—why that’s now an obsolete argument.

I believe one of the reasons **Xlibris** can’t compete is because they’ve been trying to take an evolving publishing methodology, with very fluid dynamics, and automate the process into the rigid structure of cost-effective means to generate greater profits through formula-publishing. They have a reputation in the publishing community for being relentless in making far-fetched promises to lure aspiring authors into a publishing scheme that’s short on delivery and very costly to the disgruntled author. No publisher can survive—much less produce a profit—publishing books by authors who are dissatisfied with their publishing service. No

bookseller is going to order books from a publisher who fails to deliver books as promised. There is a dark stain on our evolving branch of publishing from promises not kept by **Xlibris** that have festered lingering apprehensions among booksellers about ordering POD published books.

To read Pat’s entire column and to subscribe to her newsletter go to: www.holtuncensored.com

INFINITY PUBLISHING DOES EVERYTHING IN-HOUSE

Tom Gregory, President of **Infinity Publishing**, has created a unique business model for publishing and distributing author-originated books. Since our start of business in 1997, **Infinity** has enjoyed steady growth by doing every aspect of book publishing in-house and on our own equipment.

As Tom explains, “Our authors have control over their books and own all rights, so it seems only right for us to provide them with a publishing and distribution system where **Infinity** has absolute in-house control over book production quality and the timely distribution of order fulfillment. We take great pride in our ability to ship most book orders within 24- to 48-hours from our West Conshohocken, PA, facility. We’re able to do this instant fulfillment because our unique *just-in-time book publishing system* maintains an on-shelf inventory. Our return policy for bookstores is one of the most liberal in the industry. Just like bookstores, we earn our profits by selling books. That’s why **Infinity** produces our annual “*Express Yourself...*” **Authors’ Conference**—the more knowledgeable authors are about cost-effective ways to promote and market their books, the more *expressive* their sales will be. We strive to motivate our authors to develop innovative promotions to help their publishing dreams to thrive.”

Tours of **Infinity**’s plant and offices can be scheduled as part of your visit to Valley Forge to attend our conference and book fair the end of October. I sincerely hope we’ll see you then.

Take care and enjoy often...John