

Q&A Kevin Gerard

<http://www.conorandthecrossworlds.com>

Your tagline says you are the “Author of the Next Billion Dollar Teen Series.” How did your writing career develop?

I started writing seriously seven years ago, although my teen series has been brewing since I was nine, when I imagined riding on a gigantic winged cougar, becoming a powerful warrior, traveling to distant worlds. An offhand conversation with a Tae Kwon Do instructor spurred my writing career. He had published a martial arts book, and I asked how he found the discipline to write it. He told me he wrote for one hour every weekday after work. I didn't match his strategy, but I somehow managed to write one double-spaced page every day. Since that moment I've written six novels and a handful of short stories.

Have you self-published a book? How did you make this choice and how has it turned out?

I've written six novels and many short stories. I've been published traditionally as well as self published. I've self published two books in the Conor and the Crossworlds series. I spent years unsuccessfully querying agents and publishers. One day a small press telephoned me; I ecstatically signed a contract, but after nine months I severed the relationship. I published Conor's first book with AuthorHouse, mainly because I had deadlines and I needed it immediately. They obliged and produced a decent book. I decided to self-publish the second book with Cold Tree Press. The difference between the two companies is night and day. I've seen the galleys from Cold Tree Press, and their work is truly exceptional.

What are you working on now?

I'm writing a political espionage book centered in Washington D.C. but with events occurring throughout the world. A legendary D.C. lawyer has charged the President and Vice-President with treason, murder, and conspiracy. When the administration begins feeling the heat, they call on their number one assassin to eliminate the D.C. lawyer. The D.C. lawyer's son, a college professor in Mendocino, is, unknown to anyone, the master assassin. I don't know how it will end—I try to allow the characters to tell the story.

How about marketing and selling your work?

Promoting a self-published book is difficult, but not impossible. The challenge for marketing to bookstores is price, quality, and a having a return policy. The challenge for libraries is the proper review. Libraries depend heavily on reviews to make selections. Some review organizations do not review self-published books, but some do, like VOYA, which most libraries value highly. Lately, I've been working hard to promote the next Billion Dollar Teen Series. Since last February, I have telephoned three thousand young adult public librarians and an equal number of middle school/high school librarians. I speak to them for thirty seconds, and then mail a promotional postcard. I believe in personal contact, and although my books aren't best sellers yet, the word is getting around. I'm scheduled to visit three states in the South this January and seven states on the Eastern Seaboard next April.

How has PWSD helped you? Any advice for the other members?

PWSD is an organization of dedicated, intelligent, and ambitious folks who want to further their own careers and also those of the other members. I'm happy to say I've volunteered to assist the board to build PWSD into the most dynamic literary organization on the West Coast. The biggest way PWSD has helped me personally is through personal contacts. For example, my informal associations with Jennifer Thompson and Kathe Gogolewski have helped sell Conor's books and made his website extremely visible. Here's my advice for members. Believe in yourself. Believe in your story, product, or service. Whatever it is, believe in it like nothing else in your life. My tag line is, "I'm the author of the next Billion Dollar Teen Series," because I believe it. I'd better, because no one else will if I don't. If I'm not excited, how can anyone else be? Just love what you do, and the magic will happen.