

Episode 77 - Ali Shaw of Indigo Editing

Emily Einolander 00:21

Welcome to the Hybrid Pub Scout podcast with me, Emily Einolander. We're mapping the frontier between traditional and indie publishing. And today's guest is Ali Shaw, founder, Executive Editor, audiobook producer for Indigo Editing, Design, and More. Ali McCart Shaw, she/her, thinks her love for the written word might have something to do with the pungent odor of ink from her parents printing press, which permeated her senses before she even knew how to read. She has a bachelor's degree in English from Willamette University and a master's degree in book publishing from Portland State University, where she now teaches entrepreneurship in publishing. She also spent two years as a bookseller and sometimes still itches to create front of store displays. Ali founded Indigo in 2006, and has edited a diverse range of nonfiction authors. She began editing audio books in 2018, and launched audio book production as an Indigo service and 2020. Her book, Write Book Check, Now What? came out in 2021, Indigo Editing, Design, and More has a mission to improve the book world. To do this. They not only provide expert services to authors, small presses and large publishers, but they also advocate for thriving independent bookstore, commerce, and greater inclusion and diversity in the publishing industry. Indigo started as a firm of freelance editors in 2006, and how it's now grown to offer design ebook conversion, audio book production and publication management services. In addition to editing. Indigo is dedicated to sustainability in all its various forms, and dedicates time and money to give back to publishing, writing and literacy communities. Welcome, Ali.

Ali Shaw 02:09

Thanks so much for having me. Emily. I'm really excited to be here. Awesome.

Emily Einolander 02:19

Is there anything that you wanted to elaborate on to do with your book publishing background? Other than the fact that we both went to Portland State?

Ali Shaw 02:23

We're done. So exciting. Um, gosh, I mean, it's just, people often ask, how did I start Indigo? And that's kind of one of those things where I sort of think of in terms of, you know, those old timey autobiographies always started with Well, I was born.

Emily Einolander 02:42

Gotta start somewhere, right.

Ali Shaw 02:44

Right. Yeah. Growing up in a print shop definitely affected some, you know, my, my life path here. I think. Before I even knew how to read, I was collating. That was my chore was, collating and saddle stitching my parents' travel journal.

Emily Einolander 03:02

You I mean, I guess for you it is since you've been doing it since you're born, but Right, right.

Ali Shaw 03:11

Um, but yeah, they wrote, edited, designed and distributed printed also this travel journal that they sold all over the region. And yeah, that was, that was my little job to collate and saddle stitch it. And so it's always been this sort of trajectory that I knew that I would be making books in some way. I spent a lot of years studying literary criticism, really trying to understand how, what makes a story work, what makes a nonfiction book understandable, not information architecture there. And then from there, it was just the natural progression to go to the master's program at PSU, which was brand new. I feel like I got so lucky getting in right them.

Emily Einolander 04:02

Yeah. 2006. Have you started this then? And was that before or after you went to school?

Ali Shaw 04:09

I started it right at the end of my schooling at Portland State. Basically, I was working as a bookseller. And throughout my entire time doing the master's program, and my manager was super supportive. And every time an Ooligan book will get passed as the teaching press that the students work in through the master's program at Portland State. Every time one of our books came out, our manager would be like, let's make a display of books that Ali has helped with, you know, and so that was really supportive. And one day this woman came in and said, I'm not here to buy a book. I'm here because I wrote a book and I don't know what to do with it. My manager said, go talk to Ali, and she became my first client.

Emily Einolander 04:52

Did you get that kind of itchy, like, "oh, there's possibilities here" feeling or did you not know until you looked back?

Ali Shaw 04:59

Oh, Oh no, I absolutely felt like there were possibilities there. And she was really a fun client to work with. And she started referring other people to me. So that was actually a couple of months before I finished the program. And then once I did finish the program, it was like, well, Wordstock is coming up, why don't I get a booth there. And if I actually try to market this, maybe I can get enough clients to make this, you know, make me make a living.

Emily Einolander 05:30

So so so you got a booth at Wordstock, which is now the Portland Book Festival, which I feel is a waste of a name. But you got that by yourself, like, you just went and got a booth and was like, I own a business now. I should do that. That's brilliant. Like, hello, that's probably a little bit different back in the day, but it wasn't that long ago. Um, all right. So you make a differentiation between self publishing and independent publishing. And I would love to hear more about that, because I waffle on it all the time.

Ali Shaw 06:08

Yeah, and I want to hear your thoughts on this too. Because I was looking at your website, I was thinking that we may define it a little bit differently. And there's not really a set industry differentiation. But my thinking on it is that typically, when people hear the term self publishing, they're thinking of people who are doing things completely themselves. And when we think back to the beginning of when self publishing services became available, they were typically, "I wrote a book, and I'm not hiring anybody to help me with it at all. I'm just uploading it. And it's going to be printed print on demand." And that's it. So these were books that were not edited, were not professionally designed. They were just, you know, in Word documents, maybe even just rough drafts with some spellcheck. And then they got printed out. And that still happens today, there are lots of places where you can just push a button and your book goes up like that. But that's also where the stigma against self publishing started. Because these are not professionally produced books, they're not books where somebody has helped them make sure that the story is really strong that the character arc is there, that the information architecture is, and is built in such a way that your readers can really absorb the information. And the design is usually either very scrunched and you get a lot of eye fatigue, or it's just way too much space. So it contradicts readability science that makes it difficult for people to finish the book. So there's these negative stigmas against self publishing. And so where I think about that difference there is independent publishing is, "I wrote a book and I want to invest in professionals to professionally produce this book, so that it is the absolute best book it can possibly be. So it can compete with traditionally published books for awards and for readership." And to the point that, when you hold a traditionally published book next to one of these independently published books, you can't tell the difference.

Emily Einolander 08:27

Hmm, yeah, I love that. I think that my definition is a little bit more from the consumer perspective, probably, and just based on size. You know, traditional publishing, when I think of it as one of the bigger houses, independent publishing is anyone who kind of works together to create a book or several books, and then self publishing is more individualistic, but I don't think that that is necessarily as well defined as I think it could be. So I like that framework a lot for quality, and sort of that competitiveness with things that are produced in more of the traditional way. So you would kind of self publishing versus independent publishing is more of a quality and collaboration sort of framework. Would you call it that?

Ali Shaw 09:21

Okay, I do. Yeah. Yeah, it's great.

Emily Einolander 09:24

I think I can get behind that. Yeah. With just how many skilled hands are touching this work?

Ali Shaw 09:32

Right. Yes.

Emily Einolander 09:36

So when you say that Indigo's mission is to improve the book world, how do you mean that? I imagine some of it has to do with what we were just talking about, but it's probably more than that, too.

Ali Shaw 09:48

Yeah. And I love that you're asking this because this is something that I really love to talk about. Probably the most tangible ways that you can see that we're dedicating ourselves to improving the book world is through the scholarships that we sponsor, we started the diversity scholarship for Ooligan press students and at the master's program at Portland State. And that came from the fact that the publishing industry is overwhelmingly white, straight, binary, abled all of the things, and that there just is not a lot of representation in the marginalized populations. And so, creating the scholarship is one small thing that we can do to help invite more people to become professionals in publishing, who are from those marginalized populations and to start affecting the diversity in the industry so that we can help the industry grow in a diverse way. And then we similarly have a scholarship for clients, that clients who are from one of those marginalized populations can apply for the scholarship and receive a free service of approximately \$1,000. And so that's on the author side of it to trying to make sure that there is more diverse representation and authors out there, too.

Emily Einolander 11:26

They get to choose which of your services that they want the most, for that amount of money.

Ali Shaw 11:34

Plus, you know, I'm trying to make sure that these services are available to authors to be able to create professional quality books and trying to support a thriving independent bookstore economy, educating authors on the fact that Amazon is not the only place to release your book, and so on.

Emily Einolander 11:55

There are so many places that you can really, yeah, you serve three different types of author or publisher, authors who plan to publish independently and want a professionally produced book, authors who hope to publish traditionally and want a competitive edge in today's tough publishing market, and traditional publishing companies. So how do those types of clientele differ from one another, in their differing needs?

Ali Shaw 12:23

So I'll start with the authors, the authors who want traditional publishing, it's a very competitive market, as you know, and so we really work with them on kind of that, on the developmental editing level, and we're really looking at how strong the story is, and how does it fit with other books that are competitive titles, so that they, we can help them have a better chance making a really strong impression with an agent or a publisher and being one of those very few books that actually gets a publishing contract. So pretty much with those ones, though, we're just doing developmental editing or line editing, or both. But we're not going through proofreading and design and those kinds of things because their publisher will do those things for them. And if they were to do those things, and then submit it to a publisher would actually come across as amateurish, somebody who doesn't understand the industry. Interesting.

Emily Einolander 13:27

Can you elaborate on why that would look amateurish to someone?

Ali Shaw 13:32

Sure. So because of the publishing company, that process there is they acquire the book. And they're looking specifically for books that fit within the niche that they specialize in, and that they feel are going to fill a hole in the market and give something to readers that they don't have from somewhere else. And then the services that they do to produce the book are typically they'll do line editing again, and then or copy editing. And then they'll do proofreading, cover design, interior design, indexing, if it's relevant, and of course, lots of marketing. So if an author is submitting a book that has already gone through all of these things, then it's showing that they don't actually understand what the publisher's role is. And that's just going to be a big red flag to the publisher that this author doesn't, doesn't understand. And so we're gonna have to put in extra investment of time and energy to educate this author. And if it's a one in 100 million book, maybe they'd be willing to do that. But in a lot of cases, they're not willing in a lot of cases. There is another inquiry, another submission, that maybe the author is already more well versed in the publishing industry with a strong idea and a strong writing style. And they don't have to put so much effort into it.

Emily Einolander 15:11

Thinking back on time, or I worked a little bit in acquisition of all areas, it was a little nebulous. But when I received things that were completely done, sometimes it was a completely bound book already. And I would usually be like, so do you just want us to print this? Is that what you're asking? Because we're not a printer, or I would just be like, that's a lot of wasted time, because you're assuming that we're not going to want to change anything. You've already done all this work. And we might want to change some parts of it. But you seem not as open to that, as one should be when getting involved in this process.

Ali Shaw 15:48

Absolutely. The publishers are experts. And so it's wise for the authors to allow some space for the publishers to provide their expertise.

Emily Einolander 15:59

But still, you know, make it nice. Okay, so that's the ones with the competitive edge. And then we sort of talked about the services people who are looking for services already, and then what do you do with traditional publishing companies.

Ali Shaw 16:17

So when they need any of the services that we provide, and they are wanting to outsource those services, then we do that for them. And you know, a lot of times that looks like we need copy editing, and fact checking. They already have a budget setup, and a deadline. And we say, yep, we can do that. Or it can be any of the other services too. So that's pretty, pretty straightforward, but also, sometimes they'll have acquired a book that is by an expert in some topic, but is not. The author is not an experienced author. And so we get a big pile of notes and new months to have meetings with the author and put the book in order. Yes.

Emily Einolander 17:07

I am familiar, but I think you know, I have to bring in my experience to this because I do work with your contractors. With the work that I do, I mostly spend time developing and ghost writing for people, I

actually love that. As long as the person is open to the fact that I'm the person who knows about the writing stuff. Talking to a subject matter expert about what they're interested in is always really fun for me. So that just depends on rapport and attitude. And I know you're all professional, so you can probably deal with a lot of different types of personalities.

Ali Shaw 17:46

We definitely try.

Emily Einolander 17:51

Okay, so Indigo includes a full range of services with help at every step in the publishing process. So things like editing, design, indexing, etc. How do you decide what book publishing services to recommend to different authors?

Ali Shaw 18:07

Well, first, it's in getting to understand what the author's goal is. So yeah, definitely, if it's an author who wants traditional publishing, we're not going to be recommending design services, as an easy example there. But for the authors who want to publish themselves, then we're also looking at, you know, have you already worked with a writing group or with beta readers to get some feedback on the story development yet? Or is this a rough draft, and you need that feedback on the story development. In those cases, we'll recommend several levels of editing first, and then once that's all finalized, then move on to design and so on. Sometimes we're working with somebody who has a traditional publishing company, but that publisher is not going to release an audiobook. And so they're wanting to do their own production, or contract out their own production of an audio book. So it really just varies depending on what the author is looking for. But that first step definitely is touching base with the potential client and getting a good understanding of what they want out of working with us and then preparing an estimate package to show them how we can meet those needs.

Emily Einolander 19:35

Do you find that you offer that all upfront? Or do you sort of go piecemeal along the process with people when they're ready for one or the other?

Ali Shaw 19:43

Yeah, so that's also something that really just depends on the person and the project. Earlier this week, I actually had a consultation with somebody who has a book idea. And so at this point, I'm not going to be pitching every single service because we don't even know what the word counts can be yet, but for right now, yes, absolutely. I can talk with you about your book idea and give you some tips on getting started. Somebody who's already got a book that's ready to go and they know that they want to go all the way through the independent publishing process, then definitely I want to lay everything out right upfront so that they could get a good feel for everything that's going to be involved. And it doesn't feel like, Oh, I thought I only needed these one or two services that we talked about first. And now I feel a little bit blindsided because you're saying I need these other services to know we want to be fully transparent.

Emily Einolander 20:36

Yeah, you don't want to do reverse scope creep? No. Well, at what point do you find that your authors or potential authors become most intimidated by the process?

Ali Shaw 20:52

I want to hear your answer to this question, too. It's a great question.

Emily Einolander

Revisions.

Ali Shaw

Revisions are oh, yeah, interesting.

Emily Einolander 21:01

Because they're like, I thought I was scared. I thought I was done. But I have all these questions. And I just remember, I have other things I want to talk about. And I'm like, alright, let's just do some stuff first.

Ali Shaw 21:16

Yes, I can see that for sure. Um, I think what I, what I observe it mostly is two times actually, the first time is when they've written the book, and they've got a full rough draft. And they're so excited. And they have no idea what to do next.

Emily Einolander 21:34

Yeah, that's a different way of saying it.

Ali Shaw 21:40

So like, I know, I want to put this book out, but how does that work, um, and then on the other end of it, it's when they get close to launch. And so it's: we've gone through all the editing, we've gone through all of the design, and it's, it's that final, I approve the thing that they have to sign and say I have no more changes to make. That is usually when there's an "oh my gosh, it's actually happening. And I'm excited. But I'm also really scared, this is actually going to be in front of people's eyes now, which is what I wanted." But it's also scary. So we definitely do some cheer cheerleading as part of our services as well. And our Publication Manager, Vinnie Kinsella, loves his fantastic everything about, you know, the whole production process and everything and how things change, but he always starts out his publication management services with I want you to know that throughout this process, you get one meltdown.

Emily Einolander 22:57

That is so powerful. That one's such a flex, I love it

Ali Shaw 23:12

And people go, "No, I'm not gonna have one. oh, yes, yes, I will."

Emily Einolander 23:17

Yep. Yeah. I have them too, I just have them when I'm all alone. Or at my spouse, which, you know, he signed up for this.

Ali Shaw 23:31

Human emotions are complex, and that's okay. We just, you know, try to keep the momentum going forward.

Emily Einolander 23:38

Well, and you're also kind of giving part of yourself to random people, anyone who can pick it up, you're giving a little piece of yourself to I find that the more personal something gets when it kind of moves from that like prescriptive place to like, I'm telling a personal anecdote about my own life space, that's when the people get the most like paranoid, which I would do if it were my life. But I think that the emotional labor that we do as book professionals is definitely wrapped up in the, in the entire process. Like you can't just get into it and be completely removed from everything emotionally. So a big part of what you do is connect people with freelancers. How did you assemble your dream team? And what's your process for matching people with authors?

Ali Shaw 24:34

I love that you call them my dream team. They really are.

Emily Einolander 24:37

I mean, I know a few people on there, and they're great.

Ali Shaw 24:43

So um, yeah, well, I mean, when I started Indigo, it was just me. And I already had this vision for it to be a team, in part because I'm a somewhat social person. And while it's rare for us, isn't it? And I just think that really benefits the client to to have a team available in one place. And so from the get go, I was thinking, Okay, well, I specialize in nonfiction, as I am able to grow, I want to bring on editors who specialize in fiction, and I want to bring on designers and people who can do these various services that I can't do. Or maybe the workload is larger than just what I can accommodate. And so we've grown at various intervals over the years, we didn't go just from one to 13.

Emily Einolander 25:41

I hope not.

Ali Shaw 25:45

But that's really what the process has been, like every time is, is what do our clients or our potential clients need that we can't quite fill yet? And then taking a look out there and assembling resumes. And a lot of times we receive resumes and samples from people, even when we haven't posted anything. So we keep those on hand to review every time that we're ready to grow. Taking a look at, you know, other talent out there, and just seeing where things can be a good fit and where we can team up.

Emily Einolander 26:23

And so there's probably, do you find yourself kind of overloaded with clients and people have to wait in line to work with your team? Or is it a pretty steady distribution,

Ali Shaw 26:36

We do have some lead time. And it's typically about six to eight weeks. And we try not to let it go any longer than that. And we also try to let people know when they are first expressing interest to, you know, I want to get on your schedule, that's great talk to us sooner rather than later, so that we can get you lined up in the queue. Of course, some projects get delayed, so we're able to move some others up. And we're always trying to be transparent with people who are waiting, or people who need to delay just about, you know what that looks like, okay, if you can't work on it. If it's not going to be ready in March, then my next opening is going to be in May, you know, does that work for you kind of thing? Just as a for instance,

Emily Einolander 27:23

What do you tell people about the overall publishing timeline when they come to work with you?

Ali Shaw 27:30

Oh, do you find that a lot of people come to you thinking that they're going to be able to get their book out in like, a month?

Emily Einolander 27:37

Um, the shortest I've gotten is like three months. But I think people come in with an understanding that it's going to take a while. But yeah, I usually have to tell people longer than that. But yeah, it's still. And I think it's interesting, because I love how you turn this around to me. I just think it's interesting that neither of us are going to be able to finish it that quick. The people working on it or the author is it takes time, it takes time because of all that emotional stuff because of literally the capacity a person has in their brain to do that work. And because of all of the schedules that come together, I've had a couple that have gone longer than I wanted, but actually none of them have really gone longer than the traditional schedules that I've worked with, except for a few that I won't talk about in the mic.

Ali Shaw 28:42

That's where our coffee date. Yeah, we do. Sometimes I think there's this misconception with some people that the publishing process is really quick, especially if the book is already written. Because they're seeing it as my book is already written. It's not that they're not seeing it as a manuscript. That's a book in progress. And so we have, sometimes we need to do some education there. There's this misconception too, that editors or speed readers, and so we have to do some education there on, "No, actually we read really slowly because we're looking at every letter and every punctuation work." So that's not such a bad thing to do that education, though. We love talking about what we do and helping people understand it better. But definitely, for people who are wanting to traditionally publish, we really tried to talk with them about okay, let's plan at least two editing rounds so that we can get in developmental editing in line editing and some time to work on your query letter and any other submission materials that you might need. So let's plan three months for that to make sure that it's as solid as it can be because you don't want to waste a query to an agent or a publisher with something that isn't really solid. And then with the independent publishing clients, we talk with them about how this

needs to take 12 to 18 months. And so again, there's a lot of education there. Because when we break down the production timeline, okay, sure each editing round can take about a month. But if we're only doing three editing rounds, and then design takes another month to six weeks after that, if you're including ebook conversion, that doesn't equal 12 to 18 months, but we really try to educate them on "START YOUR publicity plan early." It's so important for booksellers and librarians and consumers to be hearing about your book before it comes out. So that you can really make sure that it launches strong, and that these bookstores and libraries know to carry your book when it comes out. If they don't know about it, they won't carry it.

Emily Einolander 30:59

That's absolutely correct. And they also aren't going to go to the airport. You know, like, Yes, Yes, that too. Not that I've met anyone who's done that. But it's a funny picture to me that I've invented completely in my head. Someone walking up to a store in the airport and being like, people are getting. So since this is you helping people with publishing services, rather than like, the regular traditional publishing contract, which, when I was getting my bank account, I tried to explain it to the person who was helping me open it, and they just looked at me like I was nuts. When I tried to explain royalties to the normal publishing company. I'm like, oh, no, it's just services, like, what? How do you make any money? I'm like, good question. How do you decide what to charge people? And how to do payment plans, stuff like that?

Ali Shaw 32:06

Oh, yeah, getting into some of the nuts and bolts. And what's funny is we just finished the the logistics unit in my entrepreneurship and publishing class. So we were just, I was just teaching other freelancers how to do this.

Emily Einolander 32:20

I should audit that course.

Ali Shaw 32:23

I would love to have you in class. So yeah, first things first is we're getting to know the project and then submitting our estimates for what each service is going to cost. And we do that based on how many hours it looks like each service is going to take. And then we've got basically an hourly rate for each service. And then we submit these EPS estimates with a range. Because sometimes things happen in a manuscript that, you know, these 10 pages are just going to take longer to edit than the other ones. And that's just how books are. So it's not a bad thing by any means. But we always just account for what we don't know yet. So in that, that's what that range is for. And then, once they approve the estimates, then we do the contract and so on. But yeah, in terms of how we are going to how we determine what we're going to charge, we've done a lot of market research based on what other editors and designers are charging, we also consider the Indigo has some extra value that some other companies may not be able to provide simply because we have a many, many years of experience in the publishing industry. And we have a team of professionals and so we can walk people through the full process we have, you know, if an editor if something happens, and they get sick, and they're not able to finish the edits on time, for example, we have other editors who can help lift that load.

Emily Einolander 34:10

Yeah, that must be a really good resource to have, especially if people start panicking if they cash in their one meltdown. So how do you determine whether one of your authors is happy with what you've done for them? And I'm particularly thinking of the independent authors.

Ali Shaw 34:31

Well, I find that people who work in communications, whether writing or whether they're writers or publishers, tend to communicate pretty well about what they think, and share their opinions. Um, so it is definitely you know, taking that time to listen to them, and if they haven't offered something, then I tried to reach out and ask, you know, how it went. And we really take that feedback seriously. Seek to understand if there's a better way that we can provide customer service. And we've been doing that, you know, we've been going for 17 years now, and so that idea of being able to always improve, I think, is really important. And that's, that's been part of what has gotten us here. And every once in a while, we'll have an author who wants to, you know, kind of do a debrief. And so we actually have a meeting, we'll do a coffee or, or a Zoom meeting, or whatever, to really talk about it all the way. And they'll go, I loved this part. And I got a little scared with this part. And, you know, the various methods it took longer than I thought it was going to. So then we know to, to educate our authors more in advance, that kind of thing. And we always do, when their books come out, I like to send them a little handmade card, a little handmade congratulations card. And that's just, you know, customer service. Kind of thing that I like to do, but it also includes a if you want to leave us a Google review. Here's the one

Emily Einolander 36:13

you did that to me. And I did. Thank you, that made me smile, getting that card. I was like this is good. So can you talk a little bit, I feel like I could talk about this way longer than this episode will allow. But what's the deal with the audiobooks? How'd you get started on that? And how's it going?

Ali Shaw 36:40

Oh, I love talking about audiobooks. Um, I got started on it, because I was kind of in a place where I've been doing editing services for like 13-14 years already, and still love editing services, but just feeling like I wanted to grow my skills with something new. And so that's exactly what I did. And I started just doing a lot of online research and at first found that there really weren't a lot of classes available for "this is how you produce audio books." And the most people who had, who were doing it were really specializing more in narration and had done like radio commercials. And they were, you know, they're selling their voice. And they just, you know, they took some, like, music production classes or whatever to learn about the software. Yeah, that's your experience too.

Emily Einolander 37:39

Well, I actually don't have a lot of experience with audiobooks. So I'm kind of excited to dive into learning about them. All I've really seen is, you know, the Amazon services, basically, did you mostly teach yourself?

Ali Shaw 37:54

I did mostly teach myself and I you know, I'm a little bit nervous to say that because I feel like you know, that, that can be off putting to some people. But what I did was, so I lived in the forums for months,

where I was just reading what other people were doing and what was working for them. Both narration wise, and equipment wise, and editing wise, software, all of the things. And then I did a lot of trial and error doing some of my own recordings and working with other people who were willing to do some recordings as well and then give me their files to practice on and learned all about how, if a cell phone is near recording equipment, then you can get an interference thing in the background and you have to rerecord everything, for example, or, you know, when people are recording in their home studios that yes, we really can't hear the cars driving by outside and the dogs barking up the road. Those sounds are really difficult to try to edit out.

Emily Einolander 39:02

I always tell guests who are talking to us from New York that it's not an episode with someone from New York unless there's a really loud siren in the middle. So that's how I make people feel better about that. It's a podcast though, audiobooks are way different.

Ali Shaw 39:17

So yeah, I just did a lot of practice with that kind of really leaning on that it just takes 1000s of hours to really learn something right and, and so I did, I think, eight books to just practice. And then I decided that I was only going to work on books that had been recorded in a real studio. And so found a studio to partner with, and they are fantastic, Opal studio over in Southeast Portland. And so all my authors when we're going in there, we work. We record there and then I do the software and have it in my office. I also found that when it comes to services that people need, there's already a feel for, I have the book and I want to hire a narrator and, and then also a producer. So I didn't need to go there. And, and that's great. But what I found is that a lot of my clients are people who want to do things themselves and do them professionally. They, you know, they don't, they want to narrate their own book, but not at home with earbuds, they want to record it in a studio and have a professional do the editing, just like they did for their text editing and their design. And so I get to coach them on narration, we have a couple of sessions in advance to help them practice and teach them about, you know, proper hydration and how to train for, for narrating for four hours straight, because that's a major vocal stream. And then from there, I take the files and I get to make them sing what I didn't think about in advance. And I wonder a little bit if you're going to be able to relate with this to just as in text editing, when you're you're training your eye to find the things that are wrong, right, you're, you're for looking for the typos and the punctuation errors and the misplaced modifiers. When it comes to audio editing, it's the same thing. And not just in the obvious, editing out the bad take and making sure that there's a good take in there to replace it. But you're also listening for all those little annoying sounds that happen just from the biology of the friction that our body makes when we talk about so yes, the mouth clicks the throat squeak so I call them nose farts. Because that's what it sounds like, you got your studio headphones on and this nose sound comes out?

Emily Einolander 42:01

I'm never gonna be able to unhear that.

Ali Shaw 42:06

Well, have I got a service for you? Um, yeah, so then I was realizing Okay, now, I love audiobooks. And in working on them, I mostly listen to all of these annoying sounds or for these annoying sounds so that I can get them out so other people don't have to.

Emily Einolander 42:28

Yeah, once I learned about high pass filters, I never could like unhear low frequencies. And when I started doing this, you know, cheating, but the compression of Zoom really helps with that. And I'm at the point where that's why I do this. So I don't have to mess around with that too much. But I just remember when people were actually recording in this room with me. It was just, I was just like, so frustrated. I was like, How do I get rid of this? And then when I listened to other podcasts, I could hear it. And then you know, that really makes you prune what you're listening to in general.

Ali Shaw 43:08

It does. It does. Yeah, I've I've listened to podcasts where I love the content and the various sounds and and the filters that they're not using make them hard to listen to. And so yeah, it's good to learn about the tools.

Emily Einolander 43:27

Yeah, and I imagine it's probably a lot more intricate with an audio book, because I don't know, just more or less off the cuff. You know, we're not doing audio dramas here. We're doing fun, fun little interviews. Yeah. So what would you say to someone who hasn't even written their book yet, but wants help or advice to get started?

Ali Shaw 43:51

Oh, the first thing I would say is come to our events. We host some virtual events on Zoom. weekly, every Thursday night we hosts sit down, shut up and write. And so that started out as an in person event that we had to move to zoom because of COVID. But it has done well on Zoom. And so we are continuing it that way. But we get together at 6pm pacific time in the Zoom Room, we chat about what we're working on, we get each other excited for it, you know, and there's this level of, you know, Team writing accountability, right, like having a gym buddy. And so after 30 minutes of chatting and checking in, then we log off and we write for an hour and a lot of times we'll check in with each other afterwards just to see how the writing went. How many words did you get? Did you get a breakthrough? Was it you know? Was it productive this time? So that's every Thursday weekly free. I want to go and yeah, please do and the links on our website at Indigo editing.com And then once a month We do monthly publishing Q and A's. And those are free for our existing clients and just a \$10 suggested contribution for people who are not current clients. And so that's an hour to bring your questions about anything book related. And we will talk about it and so on, but without fail every time there has been somebody who says, "I'm at the beginning of the writing process, what tips do you have for building that momentum?" And so we get to talk about that, and I'll share the tip that I give the most. And that is to set an alarm for the same time, every day, find a time that is best for your schedule that is least likely to be interrupted, whether that's first thing in the morning, or maybe it's later in the evening, afternoon, anytime like that. And when you feel creative. Once that alarm goes off, pull out your writing, and set a timer for eight minutes. That low standard doesn't have to be a lot of minutes means that you're actually more likely to sit down and do the writing. Because once 10 minutes is up, once the eight minutes are

up, even, you can get up and move on to the other thing, you achieved your goal in just eight minutes. And what happens a lot of times with that is that you're you've got some momentum by minute number eight, and you want to keep sitting there and you want to keep writing, that's awesome, too. Even if you don't, or you can't or you have someplace else to go, doing just eight minutes every day keeps your momentum going for the future days, too. Whereas if you go well, not today, then it's that much harder to get back into the writing when you are ready to pick it up again.

Emily Einolander 46:55

Do you have anything you would like to add? Either just subject wise or tell us where people can find you? That sort of thing?

Ali Shaw 47:04

Yeah. Well, our website is Indigo editing.com. And we love to talk with people who are in their process thinking about services. It's completely free to submit some information about your project and get some estimates on it. So yeah, definitely reach out. We also love to go to events around the Portland area. So if you're in this area, and you're headed to any book related events, watch first there, we usually have a booth and we'd love to talk with you in person. Yeah, I think that that covers that part.

Emily Einolander 47:40

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