

# How to write your first edition

Richard Parker is an employment lawyer sitting with Auckland's HR group – and an author. **And although his first book was rejected by “every publisher in the English-speaking world” – he’s also had his successes.** MGM optioned his second work; and his latest self-published book is attracting interest on Amazon.com. **SHAE SKELLERN** explains.

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, RICHARD PARKER, (pictured right) started collecting articles about the successes and failures of novelists; it's an idiosyncrasy that has helped to inspire and motivate him during his writing career and more recently, to publish his first novel.

“I’ve now got two folders worth of articles and clippings, but instead of looking at them all the time, I probably only look at them once or twice a year now,” he says.

Perhaps that's because he's achieved his goal of self-publishing his first novel – aptly named *First Edition*.

“I used to be exceptionally insecure about my work and reading about other authors showed me just how fickle the industry can be, but in a strange way it also motivated me to carry on.

“Now I'm not so bothered what people think – I'm not sure if it's because my writing has got better or I've got thicker skin.”

Clearly others *have* felt Richard's work was pretty good – an earlier work was bought by MGM studios and turned into a screenplay, but thanks to a change in management, not produced.

His latest production, *First Edition*, is about London's tabloid industry, and our fascination

with gossip, politics and celebrity culture, explored through the eyes of the novel's two main characters, a London tabloid editor and his wife, a renowned marriage therapist.

It was published by Create Space, a subsidiary of America's online retail giant, Amazon. The service allows up-and-coming novelists, musicians and filmmakers to publish their work at a fraction of the price and sell it on Amazon.

Richard gave up four hours every weeknight for a year to pen *First Edition*, writing each chapter in longhand before transferring it to his PC.

“It certainly does start to feel like home work, and the fun does disappear especially when you are writing long in to the night, but you just have to want to do it enough.”

He says that beyond Chapter One he really had no idea what was going to happen in each chapter of the novel.

“After three months of playing around with ideas in my head all I knew was the high level premise,” he says.

“The important twists developed as I was getting closer to the end and I started thinking, what is really going to make this exciting for people?”

“When I write, I literally sit there and imagine I'm observing what's happening to the characters, so I can get an absolute sense of realism.”

So, does he have any insights for our budding novelists?

“The more you learn about the industry the more you start to realise that there are no rules, but there are some simple things you can do.” So, here they are, Richard's four top tips for aspiring novelists:

1. **Read lots** – I only read about 40 novels a year (many writers read 80-120), but it's enough.
2. **Be disciplined** – Treat it like a job; try to write every day or every couple of days.
3. **Develop a very thick skin** – Some people will hate your book; don't let that put you off.
4. **Persist** – Unless you're very lucky, lots and lots of agents or publishers will reject your book. Don't give up.

“If every novel you read was amazing, then you'd probably give up right?”

“I'll never be as good as my favourite author, John Irving, but that doesn't mean I should stop writing.”

And we're glad he didn't. □

The information he was about to be told he was...  
man: the future Prime Minister of Britain...  
Such was the job of a tabloid editor in the...  
the masses left little time for qualms about...  
the rightness of what one did. The pressure...  
Globe was all about entertainment. It was also...  
to be exposed. And it was about publicly humiliati...  
That's what readers wanted. That's what they li...  
twenty-year career on Fleet Street it was that no...  
entertained quite like infidelity. Nothing sold like i...

...er man's life. And not just any...  
going to do? Not really...  
...ld. The job of entertaining...  
...tle time for doubts about...  
...s Mason's job as editor of the...  
...out exposing those who needed...  
...re of the less fortunate...  
...ned nothing else in his nearly...  
...nothing humiliated, and nothing...  
...re to sell was relentless.

As he stood by the window of his corner office...  
Square, Canary Wharf, he pondered what his rival C...  
Mark Lewis at the Tribune was thinking. It was after...  
hours earlier. He would normally be in the back of t...  
night editor and the rest of the Globe team were...  
see what stories might break overnight and...  
his political editor, Derek Cameron...  
wife, Deborah, before she went to...  
recent months it had seemed to...  
lucky. The burn-out rate of e...

...lass tower in Canada...  
...or was up to, or what...  
... off stone some two...  
... Chelsea. The...  
...ires to

At 10:15 p.m. Dere...  
doorway. As he caught their...  
asked. He knew whatever...  
And he had insisted that...  
Charles Evans," Derek...  
As in the Right Honoura...  
reckoning of the Times.



First Edition



We have two copies of  
First Edition to giveaway to  
lucky co. readers. Just email  
dita@tangiblemedia.co.nz  
to be in to win!

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