

Hi Randy!

1. Editor's and Publishers totally control all aspects of your book, once they buy the rights to it. Including the right not to publish it if they so choose

Editors simply have the power of God in editing and finalizing your document.

2. Don't worry about their guidelines. They only come into play after a publisher buys it.

Virtually everyone works in digital documents.

3. No, don't change it yet.

4. I submitted the entire manuscript, with a self addressed stamped return envelope, which was used everytime but once!

5. I used left justification.

6. I sent out about eighteen.

7. Yes. I was sued by a Lt. Colonel. He settled for a letter of apology for inaccurately portraying him and using his name. Random House gave him a letter of apology and paid \$10,000 towards his \$30,000 legal bill.

The only change I made in the book was replacing his name and rank, using only "the Lieutenant Colonel" instead.

Tell their stories, use nicknames or other names instead of their own. Those who were there, will know who you are talking about.

8. For Random House paper backs it was.

9. I provided the photograph, their art department took it from there. It has been illegally copied and used without credit in two other hardcover books.

10. I think for now, publishers would rather have printed copies submitted.

I strongly urge you to have as many people as possible, in the story, to read it. Then listen to their comments, encourage their criticisms, and take time to try and understand why they reacted. They can add personal depth and dimension to your work.

Your letters and tapes were treasures. My letters to my now ex wife were where I started. Get all the official records, read others stories, and interview all you knew there.

I'm a devotee of Glenlivet!

See you in DC.

IF you like, email me a copy and I'll give you a read.

The Price of Exit is on the way!

Tom

Randy Zahn wrote:

Tom,

Thanks so much for your response. I think I actually have more questions now than answers, but hey, I'm just a dumb helicopter pilot, not an author (yet...I hope!).

If you don't mind, I'll just pick your brain to see if I can fill in some of the big voids in my own!

- 1) Do the publisher's dictate font and style, page size and justification of submissions?
- 2) If they (the submissions) don't comply with THEIR requirements, I wonder if they just send them back with a polite note or File 13 them?
- 3) My manuscript is currently in A4 (8.5"x14"). Should I change it to U.S. 8.5"x11"?
- 4) Did you submit the complete manuscript or did you send a "teaser" to judge interest?
- 5) Was your manuscript fully justified? I have heard that some publisher's only want submissions left justified and others require full justification. What was your experience?
- 6) How many submissions did you make before RH accepted it?
- 7) Did you have anybody who you wrote about who were ass holes? What I mean is I have a few guys (very few) who were nothing but ass holes, yet they played a significant part in my tour and hence my story. I NEED to tell their story too, but I don't want to end up in a court of law. Did you change any names to (forget this protect the innocent BS) protect yourself?
- 8) Is 382 pages a limit?
- 9) How much input were you allowed for cover design?
- 10) Do publishers want hard copies or submissions on a floppy disk?

I have a few "editors" out there whose help has been invaluable to me as well. I send chapters to about four different people to get their input. First off, my wife (who is nine years younger than me, hence she really doesn't know all that much about Vietnam). She is great because if it were crap she wouldn't hesitate to tell me. Secondly, a professional journalist friend. The last two are unique as one is a girl I went to school with (and haven't seen in 32 years) but we've stayed in touch, and her husband, Ric, whom I've never met but was a Combat Photographer with the 1st Cav at Phuoc Vinh the same time I was there. He is the only vet who has read any of it

and he found it difficult because "it put me back there!" which I see as a plus. So far, four thumbs up!

One of my former CO's has offered to tech edit it and I think that would be beneficial too. Any thoughts?

I don't know if Mike told you where my inspiration for this project came from but I used to send my folks cassette tapes from RVN. My Dad was a very emotional type and I thought if he could hear my voice it would relieve a lot of his anxiety. Anyway, like I did, I thought that they just re-recorded over my tapes and returned them. In 1981 my Mom handed me a box and asked if I wanted it. I was shocked when I looked in this box and found every single tape and letter that I had sent them from BCT until DEROS. Talk about a treasure!

I didn't actually build up the courage to listen to them until 1990 and I'll tell you something Tom, it was as close as I could ever come to a trip through the Twilight Zone. Lots of tears, lots of laughter, lots of sleepless nights, and often the dread of hearing what I knew would be coming. Hence, I have my whole tour chronologically outlined and when I get stuck I simply stick the cassette in the machine and whalah, I am back in Phuoc Vinh with all the sounds and emotions of the events.

Now, the truly important stuff. Killian's is Irish mae loon, but if you ever venture over here to our little island I will treat you to some of the finest whiskey in the world!

Had another VHPA bud who came across with a request to be introduced to a red headed, green eyed Scottish lass. He was accommodated and although the fireworks didn't ignite for either of them, we all had a great time having dinner in the great hall of a 16th century castle.

I HAVE read (and enjoyed) your book, but would love an autographed copy if you would be so kind. I will be happy to reciprocate if and when I get to that point.

My address is: Randy R. Zahn



Thanks again, Tom. I look forward to making your acquaintance in DC. Have a great week.

Randy Zahn  
Cavalier 24 "the Braveheart version"  
Mar 70 - Mar 71