

Interview with J.R. Reardon

Thoughts on Self-Publishing and Book Promotion



[J.R. Reardon's Website](#)

J.R. Reardon's first book, *Confidential Communications*, was released on June 16, 2008. In that time, it has received some great honors. As of January 21, 2010, her book has received 18 customer reviews on Amazon with an average of 4 out of 5 stars. The book was tagged #1 Conspiracy, #1 Legal Thriller, #4 Suspense, and #3 Action-Adventure. On Goodreads, the book has an average rank of 4.44 out of 5 stars (out of 42 ratings).

Also, I noticed on Amazon that *Confidential Communications* is on the bestseller's Legal list in the Thriller section as of Jan. 25, 2010. I thought it might be worthwhile to "pick her brain" so other self-published authors can benefit from her knowledge.

You have chosen to self-publish *Confidential Communications* and your newest book *DISHONORED*. Why did you decide to self-publish?

(Laughs). I knew what I was getting into. The readers had spoken and they demanded more. Who was I to argue? By the time I had finished the manuscript for *DISHONORED*, I had been through the publishing process with my law review article for Suffolk University Law School ("Selecting Supreme Court Justices: Preserving the System, Protecting With Professionalism") and the publication of my first legal thriller, *Confidential Communications*. Publishing a book is about creating a good product and getting the word out there. It didn't make sense to make the readers wait when all the resources for publishing a book were at my fingertips

What has been the best thing about self-publishing?

The best thing about self-publishing is the creative control. I love to write, and I love to take pictures. Designing covers and book trailer videos is fun. Seeing my daughter's face light up when I am at last holding the finished product and hear her exclaim, "Mommy! That's you on the back!" is exhilarating. And that amazing look of love and pride in my husband's face - I just don't have words for that.

What has been the worst thing about self-publishing?

Unlike an independent film, an independent book has a stigma attached to it. The New York Times generally does not evaluate indie books. I think that's wrong, but I understand it in the sense that a number of indie authors prematurely publish without professional editing or in some cases, having anyone else take a look at their work. Hopefully the NYT will be able to develop a system for including professionally edited indie books in the near future, as I have heard a number of readers say they are losing interest in what they call "cookie cutter" books or will only read books written by independent authors.

Thankfully, the "indie reputation" is changing, as there are some true gems out there. I have read a lot of "indie" books that are excellent, and I have enjoyed some of them just as much if not more than a few who have made the NYT bestseller lists.

In today's world there is not a big difference between a self-published book and one of mainstream publishing. As long as you have your book professionally edited and you've created a good story, there's no reason why you can't market and succeed.

When you came out with your first book, *Confidential Communications*, did you have a marketing plan? (Or to put this another way, did you have any idea of what to do to promote your book?) Did you do any pre-marketing ahead of time? If so, what?

Since I was new to the industry, I had no real plan other than a few newspaper interviews, word of mouth, a proud husband and very proud

parents. The original 80 page draft of “Confidential Communications” (which was written almost 13 years ago) was well received, and the few that read the updated version before it went to print were also extremely enthusiastic, especially those few who had the opportunity to have read both the original and final versions.

The great thing about penning a book today is that we all have the internet at our fingertips, and no matter who the publisher is, it is up to the author to market. The internet makes it easier for us to reach our audience. You just need to reach out with an open mind to get the word out: think outside the box. That said, I learned the process as I went along, creating profiles on different sites. My fan base on Facebook is growing - I have almost 400 fans as of today. I have around 1700 friends on Goodreads and almost 500 people following me on Twitter. It’s nice as I can reach out to my audience as easily as they can reach out to me.

What do you do to promote your book now?

Although I live in the D.C. area, I come from Boston so I am able to spread the word to more territories more quickly than I otherwise would have been able. It is also a lot easier now that I have a fan base, which seems weird to say. I am most active on Facebook, Goodreads and Twitter. Those venues as well as my website are the best ways to reach me. Again, a lot of this is word of mouth and book signings, and I have sent signed copies to those who have been unable to attend an event. I have been welcomed with open arms by my legal profession and my alma maters. Some have spotlighted me in their magazines which have been sent across the country to other members, and others have blogged. Libraries are also picking up the book as well: public libraries as well as university law libraries around the country for their legal fiction sections.

What advice would you give authors who have not published their book yet?

If you must, swallow your pride: have your book not only read by others you trust, but also edited by a professional. While putting together your original draft, let your muses guide you and enjoy that story while you write. Editing can be draining, but stick with it. And be willing to change or rewrite things as needed.

I've enjoyed a lot of indie books which are in desperate need of editing. Focus is key. Either write a screenplay or a story. Some books read like a screenplay. Screenplays can be written later and are a different style of writing.

Also, make sure you rest when you need to and take time for you. This industry can be extremely time consuming. Don't lose track of enjoying the real world.

How do you best utilize Amazon to reach the success on there that you have? (Or to put this another way, what do you think authors should do to get the most out of Amazon?)

Getting the word out is the most important thing that an author needs to do. The reader needs to know your book exists, besides how and where to get a copy of it. That said, having your book tagged on Amazon is a big deal. The higher the rank on the tag, the more likely the book will show up earlier in a search for the subject. Clicking on a tag only takes a second, so if you have a good supportive base you can get those numbers you need. You don't have to actually buy the product to tag it on Amazon. You just need to have purchased something on Amazon in the past. Just make sure you choose the tags wisely: use tags that best describe your book, and don't abuse the tagging process. So if anyone out there has purchased anything on Amazon, I'd be eternally grateful if you and your friends would click on *DISHONORED* and check off the boxes at the bottom of the product page. (smiles)

There are many forums offered by Amazon, but know that there is a difference between an author forum and a "book club type" forum. Don't spam forums – that will only disrupt the thread and annoy potential readers. I love to read and routinely review books on various websites, as Amazon, Goodreads, Barnes and Noble, Borders, Shelfari, Twitter, etc. Many in the forums in which I participate know that I am an author just by clicking on my profile. Spamming is not necessary. On Amazon, separate from a profile page, authors have their own Author Page. That is also a good way to update readers on your work.

How do you use Facebook to promote your book? Have you noticed any techniques that work best?

I have many friends on Facebook and participate in different groups as time allows. I invite people to join my fan page and ask they invite their friends. On my fan page I update everyone on what's going on with my writing, keep a blog and share pictures related to book signings and the like. I have also recently started to throw out tidbits on other things that I think are important or interesting which are going on in the world.

Is there anything you plan to do differently in the upcoming year to promote your books that you haven't tried yet?

I'd love to do more book signings and more book festivals. The Baltimore Book Festival this year was great fun. At this point, I'm having such a great time I'll consider anything. Note the word "consider": I am an attorney!

Now, let's discuss your new book, *DISHONORED*. What is the book about?



In treachery, there is no honor...

Federal Court Judge Rebecca Tameron seemed to have it all...a loving family, a prestigious career and the respect of her community – that is, until her world falls apart. Implicated in the disappearance of a Supreme Court Justice, and the shooting of a Federal agent, Tameron scrambles to uncover the truth. The problem is, each investigative lead she pursues only results in more questions, and every investigative avenue leads back to her. How can she clear her name?

While exploring the reaches, limits and dangers of our increasingly security-conscious and interconnected world, *Dishonored* questions the faith we place in both strangers and friends, and reminds us just how perilous our techno-savvy life can be.

How did you get the idea to write it?

(Laughs again) By nature, I am always trying to improve myself so once Confidential Communications was done, I began to wonder: what if the readers want more? If so, what would make Confidential Communications exciting in the future? What could possibly happen to Rebecca that would really, for lack of a better word, suck?

Thankfully, the readers wanted more, and knowing that the story had somehow helped someone escape – even for a little while - was all the inspiration I needed. My husband saw that familiar spark in my eye and knew I was up to something. And he was right.

DISHONORED came to me out of nowhere. I could have been driving in the car, waking from a dream, cleaning the house...an idea here, an idea there...I wrote sticky notes. I wrote chapters. I typed it into the computer and suddenly, there it was.

My imagination stems from my legal background and an uncanny ability to attract the craziest of scenarios in life. That and my love of reading opens my mind. You have to practice law with an open mind, do the same in writing fiction and again while marketing your book.

You write legal thrillers. Can you give us a little bit about your background because I know you have some experience with law.

I've been licensed to practice since December of 1996, although I have "talked law" at the Thanksgiving dinner table as long as I can remember, being the granddaughter of the late Federal Judge John J. McNaught who sat on the District Court in Massachusetts.

Although I now live in the Maryland/D.C. area, I am a Boston native. I attended Suffolk University (B.S. in Communications/Pre-law track and minor in Public Policy and Government, 1993) and Suffolk University Law School (J.D. 1996). I was also the "McNaught" of the law firm Saltzman & McNaught LLP in Stoneham, Massachusetts until 2003 when I moved down here.

I have practiced law in many areas including civil and criminal litigation. I have also taught insurance law with my father Stephen R. McNaught, Esq. and am published in the Suffolk University Law Review. I am admitted to practice in the federal and state courts of Massachusetts, the District of Columbia Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. I am also active in several legal associations in both Massachusetts and the District of Columbia.

How do I feel about being a lawyer? I've loved every minute of it. I'm very proud of my profession. There are a lot of lawyer jokes. It's sad that a small percentage of the profession can quickly ruin the reputation of the whole by violating an ethical rule. This little pet peeve of mine tends to come out in my work, whether it be fiction, law reviews or blogging. Lawyers are supposed to be smart, ethical, helpful, reputable people who exist to improve our communities. More lawyers need to pay attention to the rules of ethics, the way and the reasons why they were written. If my writing inspires at least one lawyer to act more ethically or one citizen to see lawyers in a more positive light, I've done a good thing.

For more information about J.R. Reardon and her books, go to:

[J.R. Reardon's Website](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Facebook](#)

[Goodreads](#)



[Amazon paperback](#)

[Amazon Kindle](#)

[Barnes & Noble](#)

What some readers have said about *Confidential Communications*:

“...a compelling read that will keep you turning page after page, hoping that justice will prevail.” MICHAEL BALKIND, author - SUDDEN DEATH and DEAD BALL

“J.R. Reardon does a splendid job of creating characters that we love, hate and fear.” MIKE MONAHAN, author – BARRACUDA

“This book will grab your attention if you are at all interested in law, mystery, betrayal and action. Just when you thought you had the story figured out, another twist was added to make you rethink all the character roles. I thoroughly enjoyed this book. The characters are greatly played out and the hint of comedy and sarcasm was just right.” THE BOOK JOURNAL

Also, be sure to check out her latest legal thriller:



[Amazon](#)
[Barnes & Noble](#)