

Art,

My musing and wonderings about how things are done at Infinity actually began back in March of 2012. I got into a back-and-forth with Michelle Shane about Infinity's system that prevented Direct Deposits to banks. I wanted to know why Infinity did not allow 2 addresses to be on file for authors – 1 for checks going to a bank (which my bank allowed), and 1 for personal author stuff like 1099 forms. I won't take time to rehash this now.

And then I sent a couple of Review Copy requests (in late 2014) to Mark Gregory, who was always great about sending them out. When he didn't reply, as he usually did, I began to wonder what was going on.

After wondering and sending a couple more emails, I was finally put in touch with Sara, just before Christmas in 2014. She explained that Review Copies are digital now – not printed. And also told me Mark hadn't been there for about a year.

I thought it strange that an announcement didn't go out to all of the authors who had signed on to Infinity under Mark and Tom – telling us that the ship had a new Captain. Not to mention the fact that no one could reach him – there was no auto-response saying he was "no longer with Infinity." Not important enough, I guess.

This short synopsis brings up the first point of my

## **"Questions about Infinity Publishing Procedures."**

### **1) Lack of communication.**

You and I have talked about this a little regarding the 33 book fiasco. In a broader sense, as we talked about, there needs to be a better way for current authors to reach someone at Infinity. When a staff member leaves Infinity, all their emails need to be automatically transferred to the replacement. Or the new person should, at least, be able to check the inbox of the person they replaced.

OR – an email should be created for current authors (authors@infinitypublishers.com) that a staff person or his/her replacement can check easily, and that will not get lost in piles of other emails, and that won't get changed or forgotten when a staff member leaves.

AND there should be a special phone number for currently published authors.

But in a larger sense – there needs to be a better attitude developed by Infinity staff toward the authors whose talent and property are already earning the money for Infinity. It seems like everything is geared toward signing up new authors for publication. In fact, the whole website is geared toward enticing new authors toward Infinity Publishing. For them, there is tons of help. There is an Author Advocate and there are guidebooks and tons of information. Once the author is published, it's nothing but a monthly Royalty Statement. Think about it.

I would like to have known that Infinity changed hands. I would also have liked to have known that Laura Wright left – so I didn't wait for her to respond for 2 MONTHS!!!

(As I mentioned, during our first conversation, I have had a question on Gold Support for more than several weeks – unanswered. Does Gold Support still function? I was trying to log into Author Center but have forgotten my log-in info. Does the Author Center still operate?)

Moving on . . .

## 2) Sales

This is complicated and many faceted. It is so much more than the question “why aren’t people buying my book?”

Sales are important. Sales are everything. The whole Infinity business depends on the sales of books by Infinity authors.

My sales have been, roughly: 466 in 2009, 221 in 2010, 235 in 2011, 132 in 2012, 102 in 2013, 54 in 2014, and 18, as of 11/2015 (not counting the two large single orders). When I first started, I thought the trend would continue upwards. I have been sadly distressed to see the trend go down – and sharply so over the last couple of years. The first question is **WHY?**

There can always be a debate about why this is, in terms of quality of material, interest value and marketing. But this is not why I bring up the issue. It did, however, get me thinking and wondering.

**Is there some reason for my low sales numbers - other than the quality of my book and my efforts at marketing?**

I have to be honest and say that one of the things that crossed my mind was whether or not the new regime at Infinity might be doing things differently and maybe this was affecting sales somehow. **Since I didn’t know the new regime, and I don’t really know how “operations” operate, how would I find this out?**

Well I started to analyze things.

First, I began to analyze my Royalty Statements to see if I could see a trend or some other factor that might tell me something. And I started analyzing the marketplace. I wanted to see if there was activity out there in reference to the sales of my books (i.e. listings, reviews, mentions). I found my book listed in all of the appropriate places and dozens of other strange as well as questionable place (more on this later). And surprisingly I found my book in a Bibliography for a Master’s Thesis: <http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7fb769cj#page-1> – page 108. As well as in a suggested reading list for the Theatre Department at Christ University in India – Syllabus: <http://christuniversity.in/uploadimages/PEP%20SYLLABUS2012.pdf> -- page 8. So one might think the book was “getting exposure” and would have a better sales record.

## 3) Royalty Statements

In looking back over the statements (I saved nearly everything) I was seeing things that weren’t adding up in a real mathematical way. So I focused on that for a while, and, in September of last year I raised some questions with Laura. I did a Mini-audit of 2013 and 2014 using Infinity numbers, to show Laura that there were some math problems. **She never addressed this!**

Then there was a single 125 book order of my book in June, that sent the accounting department into a tail spin – because they first recorded it as Retail then realized (somehow) that it was NOT retail, it was WHOLESALE. And 6 months later my Royalty Statements are still a disaster!

So I have been focused on this for a couple of months.

The last time I heard from Laura was in November last year – she was still analyzing my Mini-audit. The Royalty amount for the 125 books was changed from Retail to Wholesale. A check was “recorded” as issued at the Retail amount - but was actually NOT issued. Then there was a new Payment recorded with the new Wholesale amount as well as a Debit Line added to the statement – even though no check for the larger Retail amount had been cut. New sales were beginning to be deducted from the Debit line – which was wrong! It all added up to bad accounting.

I wrote to Laura again in December with new questions. She did not reply.

I wrote to Laura again in January 2016 – asking “what’s up?”

**Laura NEVER REPLIED.**

I put together accurate edited copies of the last 6 Statements to clean up all of the accounting mess and emailed them to Laura. And you received a copy on 2/29/2016.

Naturally, I wondered why Laura wasn’t keeping up with this, solving the accounting issues and responding to my emails. Then I found out she was GONE!! Sound familiar ?????

So now I guess Marc will be looking into this. He has sent me a “Royalty Clarification” Spreadsheet on March 18<sup>th</sup>. I have looked at it and it DOES NOT solve any of the Accounting Problems. I have sent him back an analysis of my own.

My guess is that now, after just coming through the new 33 book fiasco, the next statement will also be a disaster when it comes out - for December sales. The problem with the February Statement is -- I HAVE NOT RECEIVED MINE YET ! ! !

**Why am I, as an author, being made to feel like I cannot question the numbers on my Statements? And no one seems to have a real, concrete explanation for all of the discrepancies?**

The thing about numbers is – they do not lie. But people dealing with numbers can AND DO make egregious errors – either accidentally or on purpose.

(By the way – I majored in Math for my Bachelor’s Degree.)

So, over the last several weeks, I have been digging deep into ALL of my Statements and Infinity accounting, as well as sales numbers and amounts, and royalties and marketing and wholesale seller, and E-books, and, and, and . . .

What follows are curious pieces of a big puzzle that I am trying to put together.

There are a lot of questions – none of which have anything to do with the quality of my book.

**And ALL of which are questions that every author at Infinity has the right to ask, and get the answers to.**

#### 4) Ingram

**How exactly – in real terms - does Infinity do business with Ingram?** Ingram pays \$7.18 for the “right” to sell my book wholesale (which they then markup). And they print the books themselves with Lightening Source. **Do they have the master file for printing? Do they just tell Infinity how many books they are going to print, and pay Infinity for those copies? What prevents them from printing extra copies and selling them retail without Infinity and the author getting paid? How does Ingram market books? Who buys books from Ingram?**

#### 5) Baker & Taylor

**Is Baker & Taylor like Ingram? Do they list books and do they also take orders for books? Are the orders wholesale orders? Who prints the books? Who monitors Baker & Taylor sales?** I cannot log-on to see if my book even exists on Baker & Taylor. **Why not?**

#### 6) Wholesale

**Are all other outside sellers (like Amazon and B&N) grouped into the “wholesale” category? Or are Amazon and B&N serviced by Ingram? Are Infinity Wholesale Sales reported in the “Wholesale” category?**

I have discovered that “Wholesalers” buy from Infinity at a variety of prices: \$7.18, \$3.78, \$12.76, \$7.98, \$10.37, \$11.63, \$8.63, \$8.47, \$9.20, \$8.61, \$9.52, \$7.38, \$7.08. These are amounts that have appeared on my Statements under “Value Sold”. The “Wholesalers” buy at these prices and resell the books after markup. **Who determines the different prices that wholesalers pay Infinity?** (There is a big difference between \$11.63 and \$3.78 in terms of royalties.)

**How can a Wholesaler buy one or two copies at the wholesale price (as opposed to a minimum of 5)? Amazon and Ingram print their own copies, but who prints all the rest? Since they are on separate lines on the Statements, what is the difference between Ingram and Wholesale in terms of buying or accounting? Who buys through Ingram and who buys through Wholesale? And what does “Net-CC” indicate?**

#### 7) Retail

**Is Infinity (BBOTW) the only place that sells our books retail? Why would sales show up at \$9.57 (Value Sold) and marked “Retail” on the statement? Who does the printing for Infinity now?**

#### 8) E-Books

**What is the sales process for E-Books? Who can sell them? Who distributes the files and how? Are the Kindle files given out to everyone who sells E-Books (like Amazon)? What are the different files that our books are formatted in to make them available across the E-Book spectrum?**

**How are the sales monitored so that Infinity and the author get paid appropriately?**

On my Statements, E-books have been sold for a variety of amounts: \$7.12, \$6.48, \$4.53, \$2.27, \$10.04, \$5.82, \$5.50, \$5.17, \$3.86. Obviously there is a big difference between prices of \$10.04 and \$2.27 - royalty-wise. **How are these different prices determined? Who**

determines which “Wholesaler” gets which price? Are the Infinity E-Books in NOOK book format for B&N? What is the Retail price of an E-Book? Where are our E-Books sold for a Retail price? Why is there no link for my E-Book on my BBOTW page?

Check this out – “Download or Read my E-book”

<http://www.wcano.com/what-we-do-working-in-the-theatre.html>

You really need to explain this to me.

## 9) Re-sellers

**How is a book re-seller allowed to market my book for \$60.30?** (Aprilbookstore, Grago Books, Online Bookshop, Sophia Bookstore, Shelfari ALL do this.) **Who supplies or prints the books for these people and the dozens of other sellers?** Some books are marked as “new.” **Where do they come from? Where is the income for Infinity and the royalty for the author? What protections do you have in place to protect Infinity authors and their intellectual property rights from being ignored and/or abused ??**

One example of abuse: [www.dailymotion.com/video/x3o6wl1](http://www.dailymotion.com/video/x3o6wl1)

Offering to let people download and read my book online if they follow this link:

<http://worthbooks.xyz/?book=0741450046>

Adding this disclaimer at the bottom

<http://worthbooks.xyz/dmca.php>

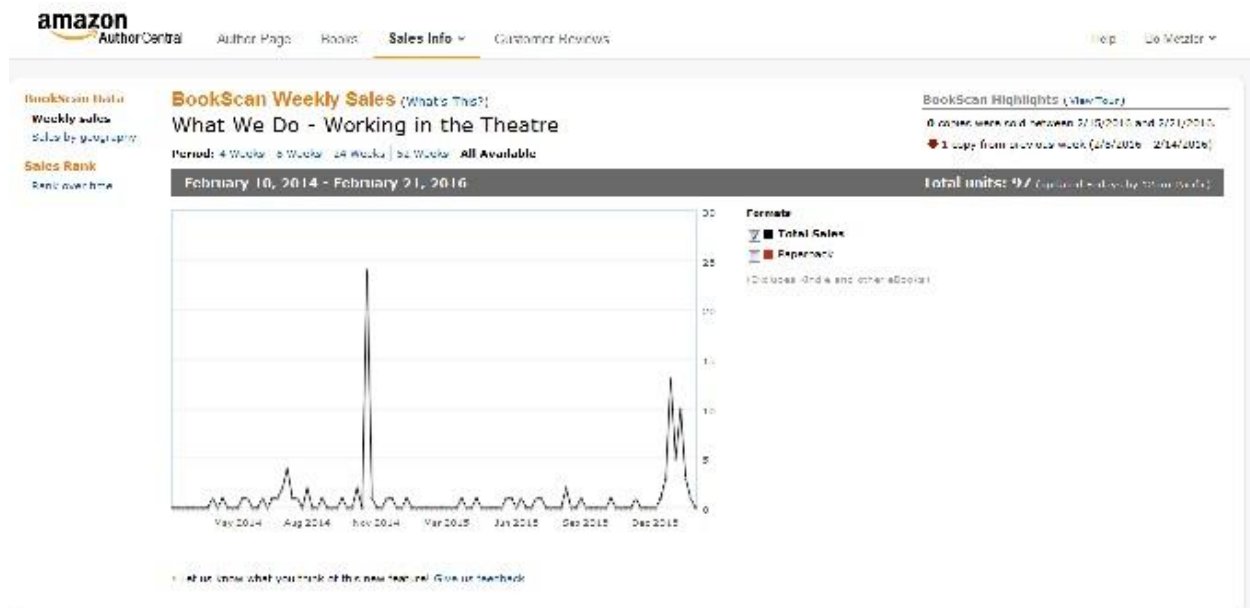
## 10) Other countries

My book is listed on book seller sites in UK, Canada, British Columbia, Australia, New Zealand, France, Germany and Norway (maybe more). **How do they receive my books to sell? Who prints the books for these sellers? Do I receive royalties from these sellers? How do royalties get collected? And if my book is for sale from all of these sellers, and several dozen more in the States, why does my Monthly Statement say I have only sold 18 books during 2015 (not including the single order for 125 books)?** This is a little hard to believe.

## 11) Monitoring Sales

**How are sales tracked? Who monitors/counts them?** On the Amazon Author Central site, Amazon says I have sold, from Amazon alone, 97 books from January of 2014 to December 2015. Infinity Royalty Statements say I have only sold a total of 72 books for the same period, some through Ingram and some as Wholesale. **How do you explain this disparity?**

See chart on next page -



## 12) ISBN

I have discovered that Amazon lists a different "ISBN" on the book details of their sites. When I asked ISBN.org for an explanation, they said these numbers are special Amazon internal numbers ASIN B00ZM36ITC and ASIN B010EW0QFC (ASIN stands for - Amazon Standard Identification Number). **What is the need for special numbers at Amazon? Does this separate numbering system give Amazon the ability to hide sales of books (by not using the ISBN), so that, when tracked by Nielsen, there is no commercial/official record of the sale (and therefore no royalty)?**

Check these links out – and explain:

<http://www.directtextbook.com/isbn/B00ZM36ITC>

<http://www.directtextbook.com/isbn/B010EW0QFC>

And what the hell is this?

<http://www.directtextbook.com/buyback/B010EW0QFC>

## 13) Miscellaneous / General

**Why did Laura Wright leave Infinity?**

**Did Sara send my thank you note to the 125 Book Buyer?** She offered to do this for me after she told me she couldn't tell me who bought 125 copies of my book. I cannot believe that I cannot know the buyer. I think Infinity's Privacy Policy should allow some leeway in a circumstance like this. I really don't know why authors can't communicate with buyers. Especially in cases like mine where my book is being bought for educational purposes and a buyer/author connection may enhance that educational experience. Ellen, the instructor from the 33 Books Fiasco, contacted me personally – I was grateful. **Why are you limiting communication between author and buyer?**

**Why can't Infinity Authors communicate with other Infinity Authors?** There may be tons of marketing strategies we could share, as well as other experiences. Maybe several of us from

certain geographical or subject areas could get together and have a joint book exposure/sale event.

**Just wondering - do any Infinity Authors work at Infinity or sit on the Board of Directors?**

**How is Infinity Business divided between Pennsylvania and Massachusetts? Who does what where?**

**If my book Retails at \$15.95, and a certain amount of that income was ear marked for printing, but now Amazon and Ingram do their own printing, what happens to that Printing set-aside when Infinity is not printing?**

**Why would I receive an Infinity Royalty of only \$1.08 on Wholesale and \$4.78 on Retail when Amazon's CreateSpace (a virtual clone of Infinity) pays \$2.68 on Wholesale and \$5.87 on Retail - and CreateSpace E-store pays a \$9.06 Royalty?**

So, as I said at the outset, LOTS of questions.

This is not like the several questions I asked you regarding the 33 Book Fiasco, to which your only reply was "Things happen."

**These are practical, procedural, sales and accounting questions with real, concrete, factual and informative answers – which all Infinity authors have a right to hear because we have entrusted our livelihood to you and the Infinity staff.**

Don't be concerned that I might not understand your answers.

Michelle made that assumption when I challenged her before she left. Her unspoken but clear attitude was: You write the books, we do the business. Her words were: "It is not that we do not want to assist the authors, but that our accounting system is not compatible to what you would like done." Not a good attitude.

The best way I can think of, for addressing and answering all of these situations and questions, is to treat me as the person that you just hired to oversee operations. **Tell me how it all works.** After all, there should be nothing about the business of selling our books, which Infinity Authors shouldn't know about.

Bo Metzler

On behalf of all Infinity Authors.