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## « *From voice to paper* »

Training in the job of Private Biography Writer

### The program

(usually parted in six *Skype* sessions)

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#### **The spirit embodied in this profession**

Main kinds of clients (memoirs, social testimony, politics etc.).

Various forms for books written : pure autobiography, fictionalization etc.

Our kinds of role : full collaborative autobiography, part-coaching, plain rewriting.

Precautions, not to be involved in slander or client's family disputes

How to conjugate material success and passion ; inspiration and organization.

Ghost-writing, or official collaborative writing?

Get a pen name? Advantage and inconvenience.

#### **How it begins**

First telephone contact, usual questions, what to reply.

The main informations usually asked by a prospective client.

How to retry the contact : following up possible clients ; use of dashboards.

The first meeting : at one's office, or at the client's home?

How to put everything clear (quotation, delay, successive steps of the book's realization...).

A safe way to avoid non-payment.

Contracting.

### **Voice collection**

Advantages, in comparison with handwrite note-taking : faithfulness, precision, preservation of the tone, benefice of some gold “nuggets” in the subject’s telling and his tone of voice.

Practical use of the digital recorder.

Most convenient length of the recordings ; how to reference them.

Much necessary precaution in saving of those sound files.

The conducting of interviews : preparation, questioning, helping the conversation along.

Usual number of the successive meetings, and their duration.

Recording and transcription : demo of several practical ways.

Exercising together, in situation, on the basis of a real client’s recording.

Meanwhile next course : the trainee exercises alone, from another recording, to check that everything is clear.

### **Text writing**

The two main steps : raw transcription, then fine writing.

Usual ratios of time spent. How to measure it and analyse the results.

The successive deliveries : process and usual number, client’s validation.

The importance of the first delivery “dry run”.

How the book grows, along the deliveries.

Appropriate level of spell checking (at this step, best is enemy of good...).

Shuttles of the text, between biographer and client: handwritten or text-processing changes.

### **Finalization of the text**

Uplifting of the final text : global and final proof reading (orthography and grammar spell checking, typo fixing, elimination of repeated words).

The interest of reading aloud.

In some cases, getting the aid of proof readers as “fresh eye”.

### **The book design**

Make it oneself, or subcontract?

The main know-how, to bring an A4 text to the chosen book format : size, margins, spacing, indent, header or footer, etc.

Insertion of scanned pictures or documents, within the text or in grouped leaves.

Text blocks to insert title, author name etc.

Full use of text-processing

Expedition to printer by pdf files.

Printer directly paid by client, or through our biographer accounts?

## **Publishing**

What characterises a true publishing contract?

The conditions generally required to reach that step.

Otherwise : casual consignments in libraries, e-books in Internet, private diffusion lists.

More frequent solution : printing at the author's own expense.

## **Gestion**

Importance of systematic classification and archiving. *Keep one's computer tidy.*

Fixing-up one's fares. Bench marking. Low prices at beginning ?

Systematic measuring of one's working time. Analysis of possible heavy differences with prices charged.

Classification of invoices. Setting-up basic (but essential) accounting dashboards.

Best tracks for advertising.

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