

Izzard Ink Editing Action Plan for *True Stories from the Files of the FBI*

After authors receive their manuscript assessment with comments from our editors, we work with them to create this action plan, with takeaways that we can bring to potential editors to help guide the project forward. This action plan helps us communicate with editors, and keep our eyes on the bigger picture of author goals and marketing strategies.

Basic Information

Title: *True Stories from the Files of the FBI*

Subtitle:

Author: W. Cleon Skousen

Brief Synopsis of the Manuscript:

Be the FBI Agent in training under J. Edgar Hoover and run the gauntlet of Machine Gun Kelly, Baby Face Nelson, and the Barker Karpis Gang. Step back into downtown Chicago of the 1930s and retrace the steps of some of America's most notorious mobsters.

True Stories from the Files of the FBI was written by W. Cleon Skousen under the direct supervision of Mr. Hoover himself. These first-hand accounts of actual "do or die" situations were used for decades to train thousands of FBI agents.

In this riveting retelling of "G-men" arresting or killing perpetrators of the country's most violent crimes, learn how the investigations led to clues for the Charles Lindbergh kidnapping case, the Kansas City Massacre, the raids by John Herbert Dillinger and his gang, "Killer" Kinnie Wagner's murder spree, and more.

Category/BISAC:

TRU010000 TRUE CRIME / Historical

TRU003000 TRUE CRIME / Organized Crime

TRU000000 TRUE CRIME / General

Top 5 Keywords/Key terms: (we will revisit these keywords with the help of an editor who's delved deeper into the content)

1. FBI History
2. True Crime
3. Federal Law Enforcement
4. John Dillinger
5. Lindbergh baby

Author Plan

What are your goals in publishing?

We want to help the family of the author tell this story in a better way, to update the language and context, to expand what's there with more up to date and balanced stories about the FBI—hopefully getting better reviews in the process. True crime has changed over the years, and for a newer generation, updates are needed. We want to do what we can to keep the work relevant.

What types of readers make up the target audience, and how will you reach that audience?

True crime readers and historians.

What steps are you taking to build a platform?

Decades ago, the author had established a great platform with two other successful books, which have also found success more recently. We want to update the platform and keep it relevant with new reviews. The book was even reviewed for a movie, although it didn't go any further. It left us wondering "why not" and looking into how we can improve it.

Are there elements you'd like to rework or rewrite yourself before enlisting the help of an editor? Are there any steps you can you take on your own to improve the manuscript to get the most out of an editor? (may not be applicable for all authors)

We don't want to change the facts of the book, but we want to update and improve some of the stories. We want to tie together the storytelling voice and make it more consistent throughout.

Book Concept

What are the top five books that are comparable to, or competing with yours, to reach a similar audience with similar content?

1. *Public Enemies: America's Greatest Crime Wave and the Birth of the FBI, 1933–34* by Bryan Burrough
2. *The Vendetta: Special Agent Melvin Purvis, John Dillinger, and Hoover's FBI in the Age of Gangsters* by Alston Purvis
3. *Enemies: A History of the FBI* by Tim Weiner
4. *The Bureau: My thirty years in Hoover's FBI* by William C. Sullivan
5. *The Bureau: The Secret History of the FBI* by Ronald Kessler

Copy and paste the book’s first paragraph:

“Wanted by the FBI!”

Those words caught the attention of a Midwestern schoolboy waiting for his father to complete some business in the Sheriff’s Office of their home county. The youngster noticed something familiar about the fugitive whose picture appeared under those striking words. Then he realized suddenly that the man described by the Federal Bureau of Investigation as an armed robber had worked on his own father’s farm until a short time before.

Why does this book need to be written now, and why are you the right author to do it?

The author had a unique perspective on these stories having worked directly alongside Hoover during that era of the FBI’s history. The book started to find success again around 2014, but sales began to drop off with some not so favorable reviews. However, these reviews didn’t really offer much in the way of actionable items to improve the book, so we wanted to identify those with an assessment from experienced editors.

For the Editor

What kind of editing do you want for your manuscript?

- Line Edit
- Developmental Edit
- Fact Check
- Proofread
- Attribution check
- Other: _____

Are there specific issues that the editor should address? Example: Clarity, organization, appropriate language, and background information for the target audience?

In addition to issues identified in the assessment, such as fact-checking, updates for a newer era, and sentence-level language issues, we’d like the book to have a more consistent voice, and be expanded to be longer.

Is the current title appropriate? Are there alternatives to consider for a title?

Not necessarily, we always felt it could be improved, and had a few other options in mind—such as “The FBI and the First OGs.” Adding a subtitle is another goal to work on.