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Survey Says: Many Independent Authors Have Escaped from Predatory Publishing

Arlington, VA (April 7) – More than a quarter of independent authors who responded to a recent [survey at IndiesUnlimited.com](#) said they definitely had, or might have, fallen victim to a predatory publisher before turning to self-publishing. The survey results were published on the blog this week.

Indies Unlimited conducted the unscientific survey as part of its #PublishingFoul series, which featured true stories from scammed authors throughout the month of March.

“Although our 115 respondents were self-selected, I think our results are pretty accurate,” said staff writer and former journalist Lynne Cantwell, who created the survey. “For example, 76% of our respondents said they had placed just one book with their predatory publisher. That’s in line with what the biggest vanity publisher, Author Solutions, has said about its own business.”

Nearly half – 47% – of the survey respondents reported losing less than \$500 to their questionable publisher. However, another 31% reported losing more than \$1,000, and one author admitted to losing more than \$5,000.

Cantwell said it’s easy to blame the victim for falling for these scams – but that’s unfair. “‘Buyer beware’ only goes so far when you’re dealing with a professional con artist,” she said. “Someone new to the world of publishing is usually so flattered by a publisher’s interest in their work that they don’t even think to do a web search to see if it’s a scam. And that’s what these predatory publishers count on. That’s how they keep their businesses going.”

Twenty-eight percent of authors responding to the survey said they had reported their bad experience to an authority. Typically, reports like these are made to a state attorney general’s office, or to a watchdog organization like Writer Beware. However, two respondents said they had kept the incident to themselves because they were afraid that their publisher would sue them if they complained publicly.

Indies Unlimited co-administrator K.S. Brooks said the website decided to do the month-long series after hearing numerous stories from authors who had been scammed. “Some of these stories just break your heart,” she said. “There’s a ton of advice out there on the web about avoiding predators, but not many first-person accounts. So we decided to give these authors a chance to tell their stories, in the hopes that others would read them and think twice about signing up with a scammer.”

“At Indies Unlimited, we cover all facets of independent publishing, from writing and editing to publishing and marketing,” said founder Stephen Hise. “We hope our #PublishingFoul coverage will be a resource for authors for years to come.”

Indies Unlimited has been named in *Publishers Weekly* as one of the top six blogs for independent authors. The website is <http://www.indiesunlimited.com>.

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Contacts:

Lynne Cantwell

K.S. Brooks

<http://www.indiesunlimited.com/contact/>

