

***WRITING AN EYE-CATCHING PROPOSAL***

**I. Short Proposal vs. Long Proposal:** You have ten seconds to grab an editor's attention, two minutes to keep it. **So which is better?**

- A. Both are necessary (standard now in ABA).
- B. Hook the editor with short proposal
- C. Close the deal (follow up) with long proposal

**II. Short proposal:**

A. Query/Cover Letter: One page/four paragraphs

- 1. Par. 1: Hook
- 2. Par. 2: Introduce yourself, publishing or other credentials, and why you are qualified to write this manuscript.
- 3. Par. 3: Brief synopsis
- 4. Par. 4: Details of length, completion, contact info, etc.

B. Synopsis:

- 1. No more than two pages double-spaced.
- 2. Does not need to answer all questions, but should offer a coherent plot line while maintaining suspense and interest of editor.

C. Sample Chapters:

- 1. 2-3 chapters depending on length; if chapter itself is more than ten pages, just one.
- 2. Must be consecutive
- 3. Full proposal should not be more than 15-20 pages.

### **III. Long Proposal:**

#### A. Contents:

1. Query/Cover Letter (from Short Proposal)
2. Title Page. Name of book, name and contact info for the author.
3. Hook Overview.
4. Author Bios (two of them: long—about half a page; short—50-75 words)
5. Prior Published Books/Endorsements/Awards
6. Synopsis (from Short Proposal)
7. Marketing analysis
8. Competition
9. Table of Contents
10. Chapter Outline/Book Overview:
  - a. Non-fiction: Narrative description of each chapter listed in the TOC.
  - b. Fiction: In-depth development of plot in paragraph/story form rather than chapter; may be as many pages as necessary.
11. Sample chapters up to 10,000 words (from Short Proposal)
12. Film Rights Overview: one paragraph (Optional)
13. 1-2 Sentence Hook Overview (Optional)

#### B. Format:

1. Each section must be divided by page breaks.
2. Purpose for long proposal format.

**SAMPLE PROPOSAL: CONGO DAWN, TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

If absolute power breeds absolute corruption, what happens when a multinational corporation with unlimited funds hires on a private military company with unbridled power, especially in a war-torn African nation where any governmental accountability is for sale at only too cheap a price?

As a daughter of American missionaries, a missionary myself and investigative journalist, I have to date lived in six countries and traveled in more than thirty on five continents. This background has provided the foundation for 16 Christian fiction releases, including 6 full-length political-suspense novels, along with numerous non-fiction articles and documentaries.

In *Congo Dawn*, when a multinational conglomerate's latest mining venture deep in the Congo's war-torn Ituri rainforest is besieged by rebel militias, contracting a private military company to restore peace would seem a humanitarian as well as business investment. But for former Marine lieutenant and Global Solutions linguist Robin Duncan, this mission proves anything but straightforward. What really motivates this rebel leader called 'Jini' ['ghost' in Swahili]? Why do the rainforest villagers seem more frightened of her employer's local allies than of the rebels? What priceless treasure are the high, electrified walls of the mine fortifications really protecting?

To make matters worse, Robin is not expecting to encounter in this isolated outpost the two men she least wants ever to meet again. Is the presence here of PMC commander Terry Wolfe and humanitarian medical volunteer Dr. Michael Stewart a fantastic coincidence, deliberate manipulation, or some twisted cosmic sense of humor?

But as a ruthless global conspiracy begins to unravel, Robin's greatest quandaries turn very personal. How can a world filled with such darkness, injustice and pain be the creation of a God of love? How do God's followers Robin has met in this terrible place take so seriously a Scriptural mandate to rejoice in their suffering [James 1:2; I Peter 4:13]? What value beyond Robin's own comprehension might human suffering possibly hold that a loving Creator God permits it to continue?

*Congo Dawn* is the latest in a series of international intrigue titles, which to date include *CrossFire* [Bolivia], *The DMZ* [Colombia], *Betrayed* [Guatemala], *Veiled Freedom and Freedom's Stand* [Afghanistan]. Additional proposed titles include *The Third Temple* [Israel], *Critical Mass* [India] and *Reap the Whirlwind* [Kazakhstan]. While each suggested novel targets some fascinating corner of our rapidly-shrinking planet where current events have focused world attention, this series is not about human calamity or the myriad reasons our world may hold for anxiety or fear, because threading through the realism and suspense of each political scenario is the far greater reality of a Creator God who passionately loves His children and holds the affairs of nations and our own lives in the palm of His Almighty Hand.

Included is a synopsis, book outline and beginning chapters for *Congo Dawn*, along with brief synopses of the next three proposed titles. If you are interested, please contact myself and/or my agent [NAME]. His contact info and my own are listed above.

Sincerely,  
Jeanette Windle

*CONGO DAWN*

SYNOPSIS

If absolute power breeds absolute corruption, what happens when a multinational corporation with unlimited funds hires on a private military company with unbridled power, especially in a Third World nation where any governmental accountability is for sale at only too cheap a price?

So-designated 'conflict minerals' have been funding rival militias in the Democratic Republic of Congo's war-ravaged northeastern Ituri Province for more than a decade of constantly shifting hostilities that have already claimed five million lives. So no global eyebrows rise when the latest mining venture of multinational conglomerate Earth Resources comes under attack in a remote region in the Ituri rainforest. At stake is not only a vast molybdenum deposit recently discovered among odd rock outcroppings that thrust high above the jungle canopy, but the lives of Congolese villagers living in the region, some of have already seen their homes razed and families massacred in vicious militia raids. Contracting a private military company, Global Solutions, to restore security to the zone would seem a humanitarian as well as business investment.

But for former Marine lieutenant and Global Solutions team linguist Robin Duncan, this mission proves anything but straightforward. What really motivates this rebel leader called 'Jini' ['ghost' in Swahili]? Why do the rainforest villagers seem more frightened of the provincial governor's own militia, the region's only force of law as well as local allies of Earth Resources, than of the rebel threat? What priceless treasure are the high, electrified walls of the mine fortifications really protecting?

To complicate matters, Robin is not expecting to encounter in this isolated outpost the two men she least wants ever to meet again. Is the presence here as second-in-command of the Global Solutions mission of former Marine sergeant Terry Wolfe, birth father to Robin's four-year-old ward Kayla, a fantastic coincidence or deliberate manipulation? Dr. Michael Stewart, one-time medic of Robin's marine unit in Afghanistan, at least has the excuse of having grown up in the region as son of medical missionaries. Past pain and tragedy have given Robin reason to detest and mistrust both men. But there are answers she still needs from both men if she is ever to find closure to her past.

When the jungle medical compound where Dr. Stewart works proves the perfect forward operating base for the Global Solutions mission, Robin is thrown back into contact with both men. But Robin's personal difficulties lose priority as the combat mission for which she's being paid reaches a boiling point. It is proving more difficult than expected to capture Jini and his rebels. And now the jungle compound where Global Solutions has set up base is swarming with survivors from burned-out and massacred villages. If their suffering places Robin's own past tragedies into perspective, it also drives home the painful doubts that have burned for so long in her own heart.

How can a world filled with such darkness, injustice and pain be the creation of a God of love? How do God's followers Robin has met in this terrible place take so seriously a Scriptural mandate to rejoice in their suffering [James 1:2; I Peter 4:13]? What value beyond Robin's own comprehension might human suffering possibly hold that a loving Creator God permits it to continue?

But Robin has already answered one too many questions, leaving far more than her own life at stake. As a ruthless global conspiracy begins to unravel, the powerful forces behind it cannot afford to leave any witnesses. And now it appears that either or both of the two men she's reluctantly come to trust again may be involved. If Robin must face heartbreak and loss again, can she do so this time with a faith refined by fire?

*Congo Dawn's* heart-pounding conclusion brings home the Scriptural truths this story addresses. The coexistence of God's love with human suffering is not an oxymoron, but a divine paradox those refined in the fires of adversity are best equipped to understand. The smallest flames of love and faith shine most brightly against the darkest night. Our heavenly Father really does know what He's doing, and His ultimate plans for our lives and all His creation will not be thwarted.

**ADDITIONAL QUERY/SYNOPSIS SAMPLE: *BETRAYED*, TYNDALE HOUSE**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

Fires smolder endlessly below the dangerous surface of Guatemala City's municipal dump. More deadly fires seethe beneath the tenuous calm of a nation recovering from brutal civil war. Fires of anger and hate. Deceit and greed. Genocide—and revenge. When an American relief worker Vicki Andrews discovers a woman's body discarded on a smoldering heap in the city dump, she cannot envision the chain reaction that will send those fires blazing far beyond the borders of one small Third World country.

An investigative journalist, I have to date, along with numerous non-fiction articles and documentaries, 12 fiction releases. Nine of these are children and young adult titles. The most recent three, *CrossFire*, *The DMZ*, and *FireStorm*, are 250,000 word political/suspense novels set so realistically in the background of our current war on terror and drugs and Latin American politics that each book has prompted government personnel to question as to where I received classified information. My own background as a daughter of American missionaries growing up in guerrilla zones of Colombia as well as 16 years observing firsthand the counter-narcotics war in Bolivia have provided the foundation for my writing.

*Betrayed* applies the same meticulous research and exciting suspense to the decades-old civil war in Guatemala—and a U. S. involvement only now emerging into the public domain. Anthropologist Vicki Andrews is researching Guatemala's 'garbage-people' when a human hand protruding from a trash bag propels her across the precarious surface of the landfill. Irritated curiosity turns to horror when Vicki uncovers no stranger, but an American volunteer—Vicki's only sister, Holly.

When Guatemalan authorities dismiss the death as another of the country's frequent muggings, Vicki refuses to accept the verdict. Because she knows what they refuse to hear. Holly had been pursuing her own investigation of corruption within international environmentalist efforts. Opposition comes not only from local authorities but her own embassy as Vicki sets out to trace her sister's last steps, a pilgrimage reaching from the squalor of Guatemalan slums and remote Mayan villages to the breathtaking cloud forests of the Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve. But every unraveled thread simply raises more questions.

What possible connection can there be between Holly's murder, the recent massacre of a mountain village—and the long-ago deaths of Vicki's own parents? What terror has stamped its dominion on the Biosphere Reserve? What shadows of the past connect U. S. national security to this present nightmare? And why are two very different men in Vicki's life so determined to discourage her investigation?

With her search other burning questions refuse to remain tamped down any longer. Have all her efforts in a few dozen children's lives made the smallest dent in the mountain of human misery? If the God of the Universe shows no interest in cleaning up the mess humanity has made of His creation, why is she she battering her own fists against the futility of the task?

An action-packed and politically relevant suspense novel, *Betrayed* is well-researched sufficiently to be only too plausible and fast-paced enough for any reader in the market for an exciting international thriller with a serious message. Following is a synopsis and the first 10,000 words of manuscript. If you are interested, please contact my agent \* \* \* \* Contact info and my own are listed above.

Sincerely,  
Jeanette Windle

*BOOK PROPOSAL*

Fires smolder endlessly below the dangerous surface of Guatemala City's municipal dump. More deadly fires seethe beneath the tenuous calm of a nation recovering from brutal civil war. Fires of anger and hate. Of deceit and greed. Of genocide—and revenge. When an American relief worker discovers a woman's body discarded on a smoldering heap in the city dump, she cannot envision the chain reaction that will send those fires blazing far beyond the borders of one small Third World country.

Anthropologist Vicki Andrews has traveled to the bleaker corners of the world for her employer, the international aid foundation Children at Risk, when her latest assignment brings her to the one place she's never had an urge to visit. The one listed on her birth certificate as the place of her birth, Guatemala. The single plus is the chance to link up with her only remaining family, her sister Holly, an eager young volunteer with Guatemala's fledgling conservation movement. But Holly is too wrapped up in her latest 'Save the Earth' crusade to offer much welcome. And when Vicki's hostess Evelyn McKee, an elderly Scottish missionary and founder of Casa de Esperanza, the aid project to the *basureros* or 'garbage people' of Guatemala City's vast municipal dump that Vicki has been detailed to investigate, turns out to know more about Vicki's past than Vicki herself, troubling questions—and long-buried memories—begin to surface.

But before Vicki can confront ghosts of the past, she is faced with a very present nightmare as her investigation stumbles across a female gun-shot victim abandoned to die on the smoldering mounds of the dump. Curiosity turns to horror when Vicki discovers

that the young woman is neither Guatemalan nor a stranger, but Vicki's younger and only sister, Holly.

When the Guatemalan authorities dismiss the death as another of the country's frequent muggings or kidnap-for-ransom, Vicki refuses to accept the verdict. Because she knows what they refuse to hear—what Vicki had been too busy to heed on her sister's last visit. Holly had been pursuing her own investigation of corruption within the international conservation efforts in Guatemala. And Vicki has her sister's dying statement.

Opposition comes not only from local authorities but her own embassy as Vicki sets out to trace her sister's last steps. It is a pilgrimage that takes Vicki from the squalor of Guatemala's City's sprawling slums to the breathtaking and rapidly dwindling cloud forests of the Sierra de las Minas Biosphere Reserve, from remote Mayan villages to halls of power in both Guatemala and U. S. governments. But every unraveled thread simply raises more questions.

What possible connection can there be between Holly's murder, the recent massacre of a mountain village—and the long-ago deaths of her own parents? What terror has stamped its dominion on the Biosphere Reserve? What long shadows of the past connect U. S. national security to this present nightmare? And why are two very different men in Vicki's life so determined to discourage her investigation?

With her search other burning questions refuse to be tamped down any longer. What is the point to her own mission? Have all her efforts in a few dozen children's lives made the smallest dent in the mountain of human need? If the God of the Universe shows



no interest in cleaning up the mess humanity has made of His creation, why should she batter her own fists against the futility of the task?

By the time Vicki's pilgrimage reaches its startling end, it has become appallingly clear that if her sister's death was no random street crime, neither was it anything as trivial as corruption in high places. Nor is Vicki the only one demanding answers. The entire country is aflame, the conflagration reaching across international borders to threaten a U. S. administration and the present war on terror. And uncovering the answers may now cost her own life because too many sectors have too much at stake for Vicki Andrews to be allowed to expose long-buried truth. With no one turning out to be who they'd seemed, who can she trust and who should she fear?

An action-packed and politically relevant suspense novel, *Betrayed* is well-researched sufficiently to be only too plausible and fast-paced enough for any reader in the market for an exciting international thriller with a serious message.

**ADDITIONAL QUERY SAMPLE: *VEILED FREEDOM*, TYNDALE HOUSE**

Author: Jeanette Windle  
Address  
Telephone #

Agent: NAME  
Contact Info

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

When a disillusioned Special Forces veteran, a relief worker with stars still stubbornly in her eyes, and a Afghan medical school dropout intersect on the streets of Kabul in *Veiled Freedom*, they can't predict an explosion of events that will test the hypocrisy of Western leadership and Afghanistan's new democracy and the limits of their own faith in an only too real 21<sup>st</sup> century fiery furnace.

As a daughter of American missionaries, a missionary myself and investigative journalist, I have to date lived in six countries and traveled in thirty. This background has provided the foundation for 14 Christian fiction releases, including 5 political/suspense novels, as well as my own heartfelt conviction that the affairs of nations and my own life are held firmly in the palm a Creator God who passionately loves His children and knows exactly what He is doing.

*Veiled Freedom* is intended to be number two of a line of stand-alone international intrigue titles, of which the first, *Betrayed*, is already scheduled for release by Tyndale in March, 2008. Each novel targets one of the myriad corners of our rapidly-shrinking planet where U. S. foreign interests have currently focused world attention. While each suggested novel has a very individual setting, characters, and spiritual theme, if there is a thread interlinking the series beyond the sheer pleasure of a gripping and fast-paced political/suspense novel, it lies in helping readers gain a better understanding of an exciting and varied world outside their own neighborhood and borders and, more importantly, why, in this post 9/11 climate that world should matter to them.

Above all, this proposed series is not about human calamity or the many reasons our world may hold for anxiety or fear, because threading through the realism and suspense of each political scenario is the far greater reality of a Creator God who passionately loves His children and holds the affairs of nations and our own lives in the palm of His Almighty Hand.

Included is a synopsis for *Veiled Freedom* and beginning chapters. If you are interested, please contact my agent [Name of Name Agency]. Her contact info and my own are listed above.

Sincerely,  
Jeanette Windle

Author: *Betrayed*, *CrossFire*, *The DMZ*, *FireStorm*, *Parker Twins Series*, *Jana's Journal*, *Zona de Despeje*

NON-FICTION QUERY SAMPLES

(\*Contract-winning queries written through Eye-Catching Proposal workshop, used with permission of authors below)

Dear Steve,

My co-worker John stopped praying, lifted up his head and exclaimed, “Wow! Where did you get that prayer?” Thinking we should conclude the sinner’s prayer I said, “Let’s keep praying and I’ll explain more afterwards.” Can you imagine stories of co-workers getting saved on their lunch breaks? How about physical healings taking place in coffee rooms? Or imagine the Body of Christ working together harmoniously without division or strife? Imagine no more; let me tell you my story.

At the age of 22, I was sent overseas to work for a major pharmaceutical company. On a flight home for Thanksgiving, I was seated next to a missionary who shared the gospel with me. Before the plane touched ground, my heart had been radically converted and I was a fresh and zealous believer in Jesus Christ. Since that time, over the last twelve years, I have witnessed and been privileged to participate in the Spirit of God’s work among co-workers in Corporate America. Now I’m ready to share the lessons I’ve learned with the Body of Christ so others can jumpstart their own workplace ministry.

“How to Jumpstart a Workplace Ministry” is a practical hands-on book with a strategy that is clear for readers to start their own workplace ministry. The book features stories from Corporate America that will encourage, excite and stimulate those who read it to action. The book also provides detailed instructions, warnings and how-to advice from tried and true experience. The purpose behind the book is to set clear direction for readers to learn how to see ministry happen in their own workplace. It is a credo of sorts, giving clear direction and actionable items in a compelling, but friend-to-friend tone.

All seventeen chapters can be completed within nine months and the first three chapters are available today. Each chapter will average 2000 to 2500 words totaling 120 to 140 pages. You may also find interest in reading my website, see address below, to have a better feel of my writing style and tone. I have written regularly for Pray! magazine over the last 3 years and can provide sample writings upon request.

I met Jeanette Windle at this year’s Philadelphia Christian Writer’s conference. After reviewing the attached proposal which includes the first three chapters of the book, Jeanette recommended that I send this query to you. Upon your review of the proposal, I hope you will be equally excited about publishing this book as I am to write it!

Yours in Christ,

Pierre \*\*\*\*\*  
e-mail : [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](#)  
website: [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](#)

Writing an Eye-Catching Proposal: Faculty Jeanette Windle

Author: Marcia \*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Home Tel. \*\*\*\*\*  
Work Tel. \*\*\*\*\*  
E-mail : [\\*\\*\\*\\*\\*](mailto:*****)

Dear Mr. \_\_\_\_:

*Meeting God at the Wailing Wall* is for anyone with a problem so complex they cannot solve it, a hurt so painful they cannot get beyond it, or a situation so thorny they cannot deal with it. Aren't we all alike? First, we try to fix the problem ourselves by reading self-help books or by making an appointment with a doctor, a lawyer, an accountant, or a therapist. But, when the issue proves to be insurmountable, we find ourselves at the Wailing Wall inquiring of God.

The Wailing Wall has come to symbolize the place to bring one's most desperate prayers. Here, where the human heart is so tender it can sense God's presence, he uniquely meets each person's need: bringing stability to uncertainty, substituting hope for despair, and providing ultimate meaning for the searching spirit.

God met me in the pain of losing a child and in the grief of a wayward child. His sweet presence in these bitter experiences sensitized me to the phenomenon illustrated from the beginning of the Torah to the last books of the Bible: In anguish, God displays his goodness and power.

*Meeting God at the Wailing Wall* organizes Old and New Testament saints into twelve support groups according to their petitions. In the first half, the biblical characters come to God with overwhelming emotions: guilt, grief, anger, fear, sadness, and loneliness. In the second half of the book, they come to the Wall with overwhelming circumstances: poverty, infertility, addiction, illness, prodigal children, and abuse. The text pairs the biblical characters with modern counterparts who experience the same problem. This enables twenty-first century readers to relate to ancients who discovered that tears are an opportunity to sense the Almighty's care.

Although penitents only talk to the Creator one at a time, silent community is felt at the Wall. This grouping of patriarchs and matriarchs, saints and sinners makes *Meeting God at the Wailing Wall* unique. In addition, their first-person accounts bring originality and freshness to the text.

My degree in Bible is from Philadelphia Biblical University, and my graduate journalism training is from Syracuse University. Practically, my skills have been honed as a Bible teacher in churches and on the mission field, as a newspaper reporter for the *Richmond Times Dispatch*, a free-lance writer for magazines, and a professor of composition and writing.

The proposal includes the first three chapters of the approximate 80,000 word manuscript. If you are interested, I could have the manuscript to you in nine months, as I have been granted a sabbatical to write in the spring semester. To meet this timetable, I have also sent the proposal to several publishers and another agent who indicated their interest at the conference. Thank you for taking time to review my synopsis and sample chapters.

Sincerely,  
*Marcia* \*\*\*\*\*  
Marcia\*\*\*\*\*

**NON-FICTION HOOK/BCC (ALSO USED FOR QUERY LETTER SIMILAR TO ABOVE)**

**How to Play Tag with a Giant: The Essential Life of a Disciple:** After his third lap around the asylum with a screaming man on his heels, the boy collapsed in exhaustion. “Well that was it!” my dad would later tell me. “I figured he had me. I might as well die like a man.” Just then, he felt a huge hand like a catcher’s mitt on his shoulder. He turned to see the large man who had been pursuing him, now calm and collected. The man looked into his eyes and uttered words my dad would never forget... ‘Tag! You’re it!’

Have you ever felt misunderstood? Do you wonder if maybe God gets that feeling on a regular basis. He pursues us so that we may know him. But often we run from a life characterized by surrender, grace, truth, and solid spiritual growth habits? **How to Play Tag with a Giant: The Essential Life of a Disciple** was written for every believer who has ever wondered, “Now what?”