

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

****For Book Proposal Clinic, prepare long proposal plus 1 chapter; separate out short proposal in separate file for initial queries.***

II. Short proposal:

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

1. Par. 1: Hook: A sentence (or more; can be 2-3, but keep to no more than 50 words) that grabs reader's attention, explains what book is about (non-fiction) or sums up the essence of the story (fiction) and elicits response from reader, which should be one of interest and curiosity. If you have written a powerful concept statement, you already have your book hook.

2. Par. 2: Introduce yourself, publishing or other credentials, and why you are qualified to write this manuscript.

3. Par. 3: Brief synopsis of book.

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 short 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 (typically hook from query/synopsis).
4. Author Bios (two of them: long—about half a page; short—50-75 words; both needed by agent/editor/marketing department)
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 (from Short Proposal)
12. Film Rights Overview: one paragraph (optional; typically combines hook and short synopsis from query)

B. Format:

1. Each above section must be divided by page breaks.
2. Purpose for long proposal format: agent or editor must be able to pull out each section to hand to a different committee or interested party.

SAMPLE PROPOSAL-FICTION: CONGO DAWN, TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS

Author: Jeanette Windle
Address
Telephone #

Agent: NAME
Contact Info

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]. 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 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 21st 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*

SAMPLE PROPOSAL NON-FICTION (**Contract-winning queries written through Eye-Catching Proposal workshop, used with permission of authors*):

Author: Jeffrey Kliewer

Email: Jeff_Kliewer@hotmail.com

Address: 661 Cornwallis Drive

Telephone: (215) 779-8721

Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

Dear * * * *:

Another college student loses her faith as her professor attacks the reliability of the Bible. She is no different from many of her classmates. She entered college with a profession of faith in Jesus Christ, but now finds herself among the silent doubters. “My pastor said” or “my parents said” just doesn’t seem good enough anymore. Is there a book that could help her? Is there a book for people who were raised to be Christian but find themselves struggling with their faith?

I wrote *Faith is not Blind* for the sake of the skeptic, the agnostic, the atheist, and the doubting Christian backsliding into unbelief. For the last ten years I’ve served as a full-time church-planting missionary with Calvary Chapel in New Jersey and inner-city Philadelphia. I completed my biblical studies and a Master’s Degree in Cross-cultural Ministry at Dallas Theological Seminary. But sixteen years ago I was that college student losing my religion and wondering if the Bible could really carry my weight. Persuasive professors had shaken my faith in the reliability of the Bible.

Sitting alone with my Bible in the middle of the night, I let it fall open to a random book of the Old Testament. That night, the Lord took me to Micah. Reading the fifth chapter, my faith in the Bible and in the Lord it reveals was resuscitated. At the time, I thought I had found in that random Scripture reading the needle in a haystack that was just what I needed. Now I know the miracle was not that I happened upon a certain book of the Bible. The miracle was far more profound than that and not really about me. The miracle was older than the coming of Jesus Christ Himself and was really about every one of us.

The miracle is that no matter which of the 39 books of the Old Testament I might have flipped open to that night, I would have found within it supernatural evidence that Jesus is in fact—not just in faith—the Lord and Savior. *Faith is not Blind* is a walk through the Old Testament, book by book, with a laser-like focus upon how each book reveals Jesus Christ as God, Man, King, Priest, Passover Lamb, Redeemer, Suffering Servant, Prophesied Christ, and so much more.

An unabashed apologetic for faith in Christ, *Faith is not Blind* is not just for doubters and unbelievers. Committed Christians would also benefit greatly from the book, finding reinforcement for their faith and equipment for sharing with others. Christians could share the book itself, like a tract, with those for whom they are concerned.

The manuscript is complete. It is just over 60,000 words. It has undergone a thorough edit by Jeanette Windle, who is a professional editor and an accomplished author of 16 published books. Included is a synopsis and beginning chapters for *Faith is not Blind*. If you are interested, please contact me. My contact information is listed above.

Sincerely,
Jeffrey Kliewer

ANOTHER NON-FICTION SAMPLE QUERY:

Author: Marcia *****

Home Tel. *****
Work Tel. *****
E-mail : *****

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.

My own Wailing Wall experience includes the pain of losing a child and the grief of a wayward child. God's 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. The Wailing Wall has come to symbolize to me the place to which I may bring my 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.

My own credentials for writing this book include a degree in Bible is from Philadelphia Biblical University and graduate journalism training 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.

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.

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*****

ADDITIONAL NON-FICTION SAMPLE:

Dear _____,

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: [*****](#)