

BEYOND THE BOOK LA
APRIL 25,2003

KENNEALLY: – the CCC’s Office of Author and Creator Relations, and I really appreciate you taking the time to join us today, especially on this lovely afternoon. Among you are members of the National Writers Union, the Authors Guild, the American Society of Journalists and Authors, and the American Society of Media Photographers.

I’m happy to be here. I’ve come in from Boston for this, and I think it’s perhaps not obvious, but Boston and Los Angeles are a good combination, a good pairing, I think. Each city really understands traffic very well, because we spend so much time in it.

But the writing scene here is a bit different than it is in Boston. I was flipping through a newspaper the other day, and I saw a photograph of Heidi Floss (sic.) at a reading she gave just recently for her book called *Pandering*, and I find it hard to imagine such an event happening in Harvard Square.

But what is great about Los Angeles that we don’t do so well in Boston is showing off. People in the West Coast, I think, are much better at talking about what they do, and introducing themselves and I think being more open. So I expect you’ll see that with our panelists, and as well, I hope you can do that after the program at the reception.

So what exactly is Beyond the Book? What do we mean by that? It sounds a bit like the old British expression, “the back of beyond,” which was an equivalent of our “middle of nowhere.” And in fact, it’s not that at all. It’s a very real and very important place, I think, for everybody in the media business today. Authors and artists and publishers are all going to wind up there at some point.

Beyond the Book takes us far indeed, almost anywhere, from bookstores, to television studios, live and in person, or downloadable online. Beyond the Book is where writers and creative people after we put down the pen or switch off the PC.

It’s not the territory where the ideas are composed and the words are written. Instead, it’s the country where we get down to business. The voyage we take there is not to find our voice but to find an audience and reach a market.

So what I’m hoping will happen for everyone here is that after you leave this afternoon, you really want to explore that world of Beyond the Book for each of you with gusto and hope. And the consolation every writer should have is that we are not alone.

A recent survey by the Jenkins Group of 1000 Americans found that four out of five feel they should write a book. The survey has also estimated that six million Americans have already gotten around to writing their manuscripts. Last year, based on ISBN numbers assigned, 80,000 of those manuscripts made it to print.

And writing on *The New York Times* op-ed page, Joe Epstein, the author of 14 books, suggested that author wannabes should maybe find something else to do. He wrote, "Save the typing, save the trees," he urged. "It is a lot better to have written a book than actually to be writing one. To be in the middle of composing a book is almost always to feel oneself in a state of confusion, doubt and mental imprisonment with an accompanying intense wish that one worked instead at bricklaying."

Well, hopefully you feel better about your work than Epstein admits to. Or maybe you're one of the lucky ones who's just turned in a manuscript. Either way, I think we're ready to go Beyond the Book.

First on the panel that I'd like to welcome is Adriana Lopez. She's the editor of *Críticas: An English Speaker's Guide to the Latest Spanish Language Titles* published by *Publishers Weekly* and *Library Journal*. She is the spokesperson for the Association of American Publishers initiative on Publishing Latino Voices for America, the committee for 2003. She has been a culture and arts editor at *Soloella.com* and the editor of *Latin Scene* and *Latin Teen* magazines. Her own works appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post* and many other publications, and through the Progressive Media Project she's published op-eds on U.S. and Latin American subjects throughout the country. I want to welcome Adriana Lopez. Thank you for coming.

LOPEZ: Thanks, Christopher.

KENNEALLY: Now, I think it's really timely for you to be here for lots of reasons, but one is a bit of news we've all heard about, which is that the Latino community, taken as a whole, is now the largest minority in the country at 13% of the population. Just to set the stage for people, because you work with it daily, what do you see as the cultural and the economic impact of that explosion of the Latino population?

LOPEZ: Well, you're seeing it at a lot of different levels in terms of the cultural impact and the economic impact of the Latino population. And what's interesting about it is that Latinos have been in the U.S. forever, before the border crossed us, you've heard this I'm sure in LA a lot, and I'm from New York, by the way, and so coming to LA is always real interesting because it's so about Latino US, it's just all there, Mexico and so forth, so it's great.

But I think what's interesting is that we're in this point now where the census numbers are really just shouting out, wow, there's this potential market for

television, for film, for music, for books catering to Latino tastes. And beforehand it was always this in-between, how do we market to Latinos? Some speak in English, some speak in Spanish, some are from Mexico, some are from South America, the Caribbean. So we've been this unidentifiable market, whereas with African Americans it was always a little more clear, but with us it's different dialects, different *sabor*, different flavor. It's been kind of a mystery.

But now with the numbers and with the demographics when the 2000 Census came out, everything became a little clearer. And again, it always takes numbers to kind of, I guess, excite marketing departments to say, OK, this is solid. It's not just this nebulous thing.

So in the publishing industry, I know we're going to talk a lot about that, they really woke up in early 2000 a lot of efforts, and imprints were launched, book clubs were launched, bestsellers lists were launched, and just, there was this whole effort to really push Latino publishing in Spanish and English.

But a little bit just looking around, I'm sure you've seen a lot of new signs that the Latino market is just growing and bound to make an effect, everywhere from Levi's commercials playing rocking Español songs without identifying this as a Latino commercial, it was just a Latino person getting down in their Levi's. Or you might have caught an episode of "Friends" recently where Jennifer Aniston throws a little Spanish into the dialogue. Or you're looking at the latest awful movie called *Chasing Papi*, which is – all right, you saw the reviews, where you're getting an all-Latino cast, a Latino director, really this first-time marketing. What the African American market has been doing for a long time already with a lot of these films.

You're seeing the first efforts of catering to Latinos. "The George Lopez Show" and the Grammy Awards are actually now on CBS permanently. If you ever flip onto that, I mean, you're watching two full hours of prime time media spoken in Spanish. You're seeing all the commercials, Budweiser, everything's just spoken in Spanish for two hours on Dan Rather's station. So it's really interesting in this new media light.

But I guess I just want to say too, what's interesting about the melting pot, and what the U.S. has always been about, is that in this era now where media is so strong, where you can live your life reading in Spanish language papers, or picking up a paper in Chinese, or whatever language you want to speak, the acculturation process is just not happening anymore. And I have this quote here, "Latinos acculturating to a dominant culture isn't going to happen when there isn't a dominant culture anymore." So this is why there's so much potential for a glorified niche market, especially for Latinos in Spanish or in English.

KENNEALLY: And in fact, I think, one thing you pointed out to me when we were talking once, is that for Spanish language publications, it's not only those who are

born to the language, but people are actually reading Spanish as a pastime. It's something that they've learned through either a life experience or an academic experience, and they want to continue to practice it. So it's not just someone whose name is Lopez, but somebody whose name is Kenneally who could be reading in Spanish as well.

LOPEZ: It's incredible. If you look at the magazine, I think in a lot of your folders there, *Críticas*, were actually written in English and we're reviewing Spanish language materials, because most of the buyers from Borders, or Barnes & Noble, or distributors are non-Spanish speakers, so we're really looking towards the English-language reader buying Spanish.

But if you look at the surnames or the names of the reviewers, a lot of them are non-Latino names. And it's amazing that librarians and a lot of professors out there are just sticklers about reading fiction or nonfiction in their native language. And this is really a remarkable thing about people who are just enjoying language for the sake of enjoyment, reading Vargas Llosa in its original Spanish or Garcia Marquéz.

And I guess I want to point out, Christopher, right there, is that for many you might have heard that Gabriel Garcia Marquéz, the Colombian author, released his memoir recently, and it was actually released in Spanish first. Knopf published 50,000 copies of the Spanish language edition. It was a 600-page long book in Spanish and it sold out in the US in three weeks.

So 50,000 of a 600-page memoir in Spanish sold out in less than three weeks. And this book was being shown in Barnes & Noble and so forth, and you'd think that the majority of the buyers were Spanish language natives and so forth, but I think a lot of them were just somebody who wanted to read Garcia Marquéz in the original language, so it just shows you.

KENNEALLY: For nonfiction writers, are there certain subjects that are potentially more appealing in Spanish language, either in translation or as a simultaneous publication?

LOPEZ: Well, let's see. One of thing about the nonfiction topic is that, what's interesting about talking with a lot of Spanish language readers and a lot of surveys we're doing in the magazine, is we're noticing that a lot of Latinos who are reading in Spanish, like to read books by experts, US experts, usually translated from English to Spanish. Therefore a book by a diet guru popular in the mainstream translated into Spanish will do very well. A book about parenting perhaps by a US expert translated into Spanish does very well too.

And the sole fact of this is that, it's really – when there's been so much creation in terms of some kind of publicity machine behind a book in English, there is always this overlap to the Spanish language community, to the Latino community.

They're hearing about it. They're seeing the names. They're seeing it automatically being filtered into their system in terms of this book is good and this book is trustworthy, and they want to get it and read it in Spanish.

I know that famous classic pregnancy book *What to Expect When You're Expecting* did phenomenally in Spanish. Books, just, I guess, about business also is really where we're seeing a lot of new growth in terms of publishing houses catering to a lot of these new business owners who are Latino now.

KENNEALLY: Right. I was going to say in fact I think the magazine did a survey that identified there's a real gap in business books in Spanish.

LOPEZ: Yeah, it's amazing. I have it down. In terms of 2002, there was a study that said 39.5% of minority-owned businesses were owned by Latinos. I think that's about 6% of total U.S. population. But here is this new group, they're starting businesses, and there's really not too many books in Spanish readily available, written by U.S. experts for the Spanish language community. You've got a lot of books being imported from Spain and Latin America, but we all know books written in Spain and Latin America on how to do business, and your local Madrid bank, or your local Bogota bank are very different from what it's like to deal with Citibank and so forth, about getting loans and how to be savvy with your business tips. So we're seeing actually a lot of publishing houses now starting catering with business books and so forth, and this goes down the line for medical advice too, and definitely Latinos trust US experts.

KENNEALLY: If you're a writer, and either you've got a book that's already written, or perhaps even if it's a proposal. Let's start there. And you're talking with your agent about who he or she should be approaching. Are there things to be aware of as the writer talking about the potential for Spanish language. I mean, it sounds like if you've got something that might be about writing business plans, or the entrepreneurial experience or something like that, that conceivably could be right for them. And do you know, I'm sure you've worked with a lot of agents, are they aware of those possibilities, or is it really for the writer to say, hey, check this out?

LOPEZ: Well, I think with your agents, as you know, you can't rely on your agent for everything, and you really have to wake them up to the possibilities. If not they'll just sit there. But I know that working with a lot of U.S. Latino writers who write in English, and are interested in their books being translated into Spanish, you really have to convince your agent that there's a market out there, and you want to know about getting translated, or actually getting your global rights.

KENNEALLY: Well, yeah, I mean, I suppose the first thing to do is to make them aware that I've got this business book, you ought to be thinking about the Spanish language rights in addition to the obvious English, and you're right, probably the best thing to do is to be armed with some numbers and to cite the fact that there's a lack of these or something like that.

LOPEZ: Right, right, right. So my advice, I guess, to that, you have to realize this, that when you're talking about the Spanish language market, there's the rights issues. Usually the best thing you could do is take your book and try to get it sold overseas. And usually there's this Frankfurt Book Fair, which you might have heard about, where it's like the place where all the exchanges are from French and German, where all these rights are being sold for different languages. And a lot of books are really sold at Frankfurt and so forth, so if your agent goes to Frankfurt, and he or she sells your book, your book will start getting possibly distribution throughout Europe in Spanish, German or French. And eventually that book, translated into Spanish, will probably then get imported to the US in Spanish and sold at your local Barnes & Noble or independent bookstore.

But what's happening now is that since the US market is starting to become this real big player for Spanish-language publishing, now a lot of publishers are retaining rights to the US. So for instance the Garcia Márquez book had rights for the US. Sandra Cisneros, the Mexican American author, Knopf also retained rights for the US. So in terms of it's a hot book, if it's a Grisham, or if you're a Danielle Steele, you'll have rights for the US and distribution for your Spanish language books.

But it's good to actually start abroad, Christopher. I think that the best thing is really, if your agent wants to pick up a copy of *Críticas*, you can just kind of look by the reviews, and say, hey, I have got a health book, and I think it's got a potential to make another couple of thousands of sales in Spanish, have your agent take a look at the magazine, find out what the publishing house is, contact the editors at Frankfurt or via e-mail, which has happening now, and you can probably get yourself rights in a different language and a life abroad and here.

KENNEALLY: Can I ask you one last question, then, which is the fear, I'm sure, that some of us have. We've all heard stories about poor translations. Everybody talks about the story of the *Nova* and so forth, but is there something you would suggest people do as far as when they actually have the translation there. I mean, is it to get a friend who speaks Spanish to read it, or what, because if I don't speak Spanish, and I don't, I don't know if it's good or not.

LOPEZ: Yeah. Has anybody ever tried to get anything translated here, I'm just curious?

_____: Yeah, it's not my own personal, but just for business, yeah.

LOPEZ: How'd it go?

_____: It went OK, sometimes we do it in house, and the people that do it are with a private company. It just depends. It's hit-or-miss.

LOPEZ: It's very hit-or-miss. Anybody else, yeah, you got it, was it a piece of fiction or a piece of nonfiction or –?

____: It was a piece of nonfiction, but it was more – some of the translation was not correct. It was similar, but it wasn't on target. It wasn't the exact word that you should have used.

LOPEZ: Yeah, you too.

____: I have a Pablo Neruda book that has several different translators, and there are just certain poems that I like better, and I'll read in Spanish, and I can just tell it's not right. I'm not like fluent, but I can just tell.

LOPEZ: Yeah. No in poetry, yeah, you too.

____: I just want to say that I do speak Spanish and I know what you're talking about..

LOPEZ: Yeah, no, this is a big case, and just to start here, yeah.

____: But I want to say that the most weird case of translation from Spanish to the English is a book of poetry (inaudible), because on the last chant it doesn't have words. It has sounds.

LOPEZ: Translator who translates sounds, yeah.

KENNEALLY: But I really admired the person who translated that book, because how can you translate sounds? It was Otto Weinberger, the one who translated Octavio Paz to the English. And when I saw Anita Carno, the owner of Cultura Latina Bookstore in Long Beach, I told her, you know, Anita, that is the most difficult translation that I've ever seen.

LOPEZ: And what's so sad, really, I just wanted to find out who's gone through it, because it's the biggest – we have a ball covering it in *Críticas*. What we're doing now in the magazine is, again for you who don't know about *Críticas*, we're pretty much a *Publishers Weekly* about the Spanish language publishing world. And what we're doing now is that we're actually critiquing good and bad translations, especially in fiction. Imagined fiction.

And what I really want to say to that, Christopher, is that there is this idea of a universal Spanish, and yes, for the most part it works in nonfiction. It works on Univisión. It works on Telemundo. But when it comes to fiction, there's big disputes.

But I just want to point out a funny story, it is one of my favorite translation stories, the pitfalls of literal translation. The Frank Perdue slogan, "It takes a tough man to make a tender chicken," was once translated as, "It takes an aroused man to make a

chicken affectionate.” This is an example of a literal translation, and this is where, if exactly you take a Microsoft Word program, and just hit translation, you’re going to get these literal translations. So the idea is that when you or your publisher say, OK, this book has a great potential to go into Spanish, is to really go out and try to find experts.

In the magazine *Críticas* we list the names of the translators, these poor souls who do such hard work and get no credit for rewriting works, literally. And the whole idea is we’re really trying to give names to the translators. So if you’re an author, take a look at the magazine, take a look at the genre, and you can actually find the translators through the publishing houses. And that’s really a good key, is really networking through other writers and saying, hey, you got your book translated, who did your book, and so forth.

Things to know, definitely if you’re hiring a writer, if you’re trying to, say, target the Mexican American community, and you hire a Cuban writer, who’s got a Cuban vernacular, it’s not going to go well. You should really try to find someone, especially if it’s that nuanced with Mexican dialect and so forth, make sure you try to find someone who’s knowledgeable with the Mexican dialect. But there are words, but I just want to say overall, there are – books get translated in somewhat of a universal Spanish, and the funny thing is, listen, there’s *Trainspotting* and there’s English from the South, correct? We can understand each other. And that’s what happens in Spanish too.

Latinos, especially in the U.S., were used to conversing with Cubans, and Salvadorans and Colombianos, and we all kind of get along, and there’s always these words, but you can always figure it out in the context. So don’t get hung up on this idea. Usually just get advice, and usually have these conversations with your translator, whoever your publishing house is hiring, and really just have this conversation about avoid using these dialects, try to find the most universal word in your Larousse dictionary, and so forth. So, yeah.

KENNEALLY: It just sounds to me like if you are told that your translator was Bill Gates, you should be concerned.

LOPEZ: Well, yes, exactly, right, yeah.

KENNEALLY: Thank you very much, Adriana.

LOPEZ: Thank you. (applause)

KENNEALLY: Just to help you understand the format here, we will be going through – I want to have preliminary chats with each of the panel, there’ll be a quick break, and you’ll all have an opportunity to ask questions and do some interaction there, so I’ll ask you just to hold your questions until that part of the program.

Right now I want to introduce Joe Robinson. Joe is a journalist, author and film writer. His most recent book is *Work to Live: The Guide to Getting a Life*. That was published earlier this year by Perigee. He's the founder of the Work to Live Campaign, which is lobbying Congress for a minimum paid leave law, and he's the former editor and publisher of the award-winning *Escape* magazine, an adventure, travel and expedition publication.

I used to write for that and the photographer I worked with called it Holidays for Maniacs because it involved all kinds of unusual assignments. We'll talk a bit about that.

Joe's own articles have appeared in *National Geographic Adventure* and the *Utne Reader*, and he's been interviewed by "The Today Show," CNN, NPR and many other publications. Welcome, Joe Robinson.

ROBINSON: Thanks, Chris. I used to be Chris's travel agent.

KENNEALLY: That's right.

ROBINSON: Head off to Tehran, and all the high spots.

KENNEALLY: Right. And I was always wondering what it was that he was up to, because each assignment just got a little bit funkier, shall we say. But we really appreciated it. Derek Szabo and I, really enjoyed working with Joe, it was a pleasure. And in fact what I want to try to talk about is something that Joe is experienced in on both sides. He's been an editor and a writer throughout his career, and we're going to try to explore those different roles and what you know about that.

But first of all I just want to point out that you got your start writing rock music reviews in London in the '70s. And one of your colleagues went on to another career. It was Chrissie Hynde, right?

ROBINSON: That's right. It was Chrissie Hynde, yeah. She was – we were writing about music at the same time, and she had a band, and she went on to big things.

KENNEALLY: Yeah, well, you know, I was talking about the similarities with Los Angeles and in Boston, and some of the disparities as well. And certainly one of them is that I would never hear Radiohead on WGBH in Boston, although I was listening to KCRW this morning and there it was. So music's really important to this culture too.

Joe, which is the most thankless job, to be a writer or to be an editor?

ROBINSON: That's no contest, being an editor. I think a lot of times, writers feel like we don't get enough respect, and we don't know what's in the mind of the editor

out there, and our stories get chopped up and obliterated. But when you're sitting in the editor's chair, you don't even get a byline. Basically the only time that you're aware of the editor is if he's not doing his job right.

Good editing is just a good story, and so there's oftentimes a huge variance in what comes over the transom from writers, and then the final piece that goes into the magazine, for various reasons.

The writer doesn't always know what the voice of the publication is. They may not have the vitality that you need for the story. There might be clarity issues, whatever. And in some cases they're pretty radical transformations that have to take place, even though I hate it when that happens to me on the other end.

KENNEALLY: Right. Well, let's stick to the editor side. What was your #1 pet peeve then at *Escape*? Was there something that really got under your skin more than anything else that writers did?

ROBINSON: I think it's that people who didn't spend enough time doing the piece. I think that really this is one of the most important features of writing, I think, and it really requires patience. And that is to be able to go over and over something until you can really craft it. And I think, like so much of what we're living in today, everything is about speed, and turning it around.

And I recall a conversation I had with one writer, and I had assigned him a piece. It was a short feature, but it was going to be around 3000 words. "I'll have it to you in a couple of days." I said, "I don't want it in a couple of days. A couple of weeks, yeah, then turn it in."

And so this was a battle, you'd get a piece, and you just knew that somebody did not spend enough time with it. And by time, I mean, degenericizing it. I think that writers, a lot of times, and I think it's easy to fall into this because the stories do get hacked up by editors out there. You're trying to kind of anticipate and censor yourself a little bit, and I would advise against that. I would say, put as much life into it as you can, and dare them to remove it, basically, because it's so good.

And so, what I would often find, though, is that people's experience in shooting stuff off to various publications made them think that, well, let's make it as bland as possible, and then it's got a chance. But at least at *Escape* magazine, what we really looked for was writing that mirrored the life, and spontaneity, and the surprise of adventure travel, which is the act of discovery and exploring. And that's the sort of juice that we looked for in the writing, and that was often missing.

KENNEALLY: When we turn the tables, though, and talk about the writer's experience of editors, I know you told me that one thing you're more aware of now, when you're submitting pieces, is just how difficult it is to get an editor's attention, to get

their time. Because, I think, writers can be unaware of how busy the editor's life truly is. Can you talk about that too?

ROBINSON: Oh, yeah, no doubt about it. And I know really well just from my own experience. The manuscripts would pour in, the unsolicited stuff. We had somebody look at them once every three weeks, or once a month, or something like that. I didn't have time. My editors didn't have time. And that's the reality. People that are on a regular frequency with a magazine, particularly the monthlies, I mean, they're just constantly, barely getting each issue out, and there's just very little time to talk about new stuff.

So you have to find ways to get somebody's attention, or get some live human on the phone that you can talk to, and it's better to start working your way up from the bottom. Start with the assistant editors and the associate editors, and try to find someone that you can engage and intrigue with your story idea, and make it a bite-size nugget. You need a sound byte like everybody else does today. And make it so that somebody takes the ball and moves it up the ladder there.

KENNEALLY: And they become enlisted in your cause.

ROBINSON: Yeah, you kind of deputize these people.

KENNEALLY: Right, exactly. Well, the Work to Live Campaign grew out of a series of columns, and from there, a campaign that you started while you were at *Escape*, and what it was about was having the time to live life, and I think freelancers especially find themselves compelled to work all the time. Can you talk about your own experience there and do you give yourself a vacation? What do you do to balance your own life? And I suppose you should tell people a bit more about what the Work to Live Campaign is about.

ROBINSON: Yeah, sure. Well, I had been writing stories for years about what I call America's vacation deficit disorder. (laughter) The fact that we're the only industrialized nation, the only one, without a minimum paid leave law. It's four and five weeks by law in Europe. It's three weeks in China. Two weeks in Japan. We've got zero.

So because we don't have a law, there's an illegitimacy about taking your time off. You can't even enjoy it when you're on the vacation, because you feel guilty about it. So there's kind of an illicit thing built into the fact that it's really at the behest of the employer that you get any time at all, and many people don't. I got letters after I started the campaign from people across the country who'd worked at companies for 10 years, no paid leave. One was from a woman who'd been at company for 10 years, and she had no paid leave. She was 74 years old. And it's pathetic.

And so I started a petition campaign to try to get a law passed in Congress and it attracted quite a bit of attention, quite a bit of media. And it sort of springboarded into the book after hearing about various people's heart attacks and nervous breakdowns. I mean, really we're a nation on the verge of a nervous breakdown, basically, with overwork today, we're working more than we have since the 1920s. And there's actually a couple pieces of legislation in Congress, just happened over the last two weeks, that are going to increase everybody's overtime. We can get into that as a side note. But –

KENNEALLY: Well, I wonder for writers, speaking generally then, there was a writer, I've shared it with you, who had an essay in *The New York Times* recently, talked about how Americans have chosen money over time, that, if you will, speaking generally, Europeans would rather have the time than the money. Tell me then, as a writer, why is the time more important than the money?

ROBINSON: Well, it's no more important, or I should say, it's more important for a writer to have that time than just about anybody else. Because really writers are the sum total of their experiences in the great wide world, and when you're in a cocoon of work doing what we're programmed to think that we're supposed to be doing, which is working around the clock and not living, you are robbing yourself of the experiences that are going to go into your writing.

Because as writers we can use everything. And we need to be out there participating and immersing in various aspects of life or we don't have anything worthy to write about. And so I think it's really important, even though as a freelancer you're trying to always get that next assignment, and always trying to pay the bills, you've got to put yourself on the calendar. Because that's really the source of your gig. That's where your ideas are going to come from, your inspiration, and so it's really important that you make the time and get out there.

KENNEALLY: Can you talk about another subject that you've written about throughout your career, then, which is music? Going back to the '70s, writing about rock, and today you contribute to MTV on "The Global Jukebox" and so forth. What for you as a writer has been so absorbing about music? Why do you like writing about it so much?

ROBINSON: Well, I think music and travel have really been my two main passions in life, and I think they both come from the same place, which is discovery. And I think that's the exciting part of writing as well, which is that self-exploration, the exploration of events around you, and the chance to analyze what's happening. But it's a growth process. It's being able to wander and discover at random what's out there. The spontaneity of it. And also music is just a great muse.

Just to share one little story, before I wrote *Work to Live*, I had done a book back in the '80s, and it was such a torturous course that I said, "I'll never write another

one, no way.” But books, like writing in general, I think if you’re a writer you have to do it. It’s not something you want to do, you just have to do it.

So I found myself in the process of writing another book. But this time I got a break. There was construction going on at the building next to me, so I put on my Walkman, and all of a sudden the words were just flying onto the page. And I blasted through the book with just about every jazz album I had in my collection, and every world music thing that wasn’t in English to distract me from the writing, and so it turned out to be a real inspiration in terms of the actual getting it done.

KENNEALLY: Well, you know what? I’m going to hold you there, that was great, because I think it makes a great place to go, which is to Susan Perry, who comes to us from Silver –

PERRY: Silver Lake.

KENNEALLY: Silver Lake, I’m trying to say Silver Springs, Silver Lake. She’s a Ph.D. and a social psychologist with a special interest in positive psychology. She’s the best-selling author of six books and the award-winning writer of more than 800 articles, essays and advice columns. ASJA has honored her with its Outstanding Service Article Award, and she’s been written in and interviewed by such publications as *Psychology Today*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Women’s Health and Fitness*, *USA Today* and so forth.

Her most recent books include *Loving in Flow: How the Happiest Couples Get and Stay That Way*, *Writing in Flow* – notice a theme here – *Keys to Enhanced Creativity*. A book called *Playing Smart: The Family Guide to Enriching, Offbeat Learning Activities*, and *Catch the Spirit: Teen Volunteers Tell How They Made a Difference*. Welcome, Susan.

PERRY: Thank you. (applause)

KENNEALLY: Joe was just talking about something which sounds a lot like what you’re going to tell us about, but I want to start by admitting and maybe this is my proper Bostonian way of looking at the world, but *Writing in Flow* sounds rather touchy-feely for a discussion topic at a conference about the business of writing. And yet when we’ve talked about it, you’ve told me that it’s really critical to getting the job done, which is really, after all, the business we are faced with. So can you talk about that? I guess you have to define for us what that term means, and then tell us how it helps a writer to get the article written, or the book written.

PERRY: OK, flow is a universal experience. We’ve all had it in something. I discovered that I have it the most at late night parties with friends. I look at my clock and say, uh, oh, it’s midnight. I had no idea. The last time I’d looked it was 9:00. You can get into it in hobbies, sports, it’s called “in the zone” for sports,

“being in the zone,” in sex, and I use that analogy in writing in flow a lot because it really has a lot of similarities.

Flow is a state where you’re so deeply engaged in what you’re doing you forget time, you forget yourself, you forget whatever rewards might, if you’re really lucky come later, and concentrate on the intrinsic pleasure of doing the thing you’re doing. Pleasure isn’t even the word. You’re in it, you’re of it, you’re part of it. Yeah, it sounds touchy-feely, mystical, it’s transcendent in a way. It’s all of those things but it’s also very scientific. Something is going on in your brain, you’re shifting into another place. And it’s a very self-rewarding place.

So whatever your task is, whatever your goal is, flow is a good way to get there, because it feels so good you’ll do the thing more. And the more you do a thing, writing for example, the better you get at it, the closer you’ll get to meeting your goals, your deadlines, write the book, the articles, that sort of thing.

KENNEALLY: Well then, let’s talk about some keys to getting there. I know in the book *Writing and Flow* you’ve got some – you need a reason to write, you need to think like a writer, to talk about some things –

PERRY: Well, in order to make a deep psychological book palatable and saleable, I had to come up with – again making that five keys. Chic sent me Hy, who is the University of Chicago, formerly University of Chicago, currently Claremont Graduate University researcher, who came up with the term flow, because so many people, when you ask them about their flow experiences, use some sort of watery, flowing imagery, and he said, “Well, let’s call it flow,” and that’s what stuck.

So he came up with eight or 10, depending on which of his many flow books he wrote. Five seemed to work for me. One of them was, “Have a reason to write.” It sounds so simple, but it’s about your motivations. Someone called me once to consult. She wanted to write a book to make a lot of money. And I said, “Well, what kind of novels” – she wanted to write a novel – “What kind of novels do you write.” She said, “Oh, I don’t – they’re a waste of time. I don’t read novels.” (laughter) We talked at some length. And she really insisted she wanted my help in writing a novel, and I gave her a few suggestions how to get started. And then, you get started, go out and read a novel, come back, and we’ll talk. She never came back. (laughter)

That motivation is not enough. I mean, many people want to write a book that will make a lot of money, but if that’s your only reason, when you get to the really hard parts, and improving the craft, and sticking with it, and getting lost in that place we’re talking about, where you’re – not imprisoned. Who said that? No, you quoted someone who said that that feeling of being imprisoned in this nebulous, unclear world, but there’s not a lot of closure when you’re involved in a long project. And to get through that, and be willing to stick with it, there’s got to be some pleasure with it. Flow is a good way to go. Writing just for money is usually

not enough. It doesn't hurt to also have that being held out there, but it isn't usually enough. So you look at what your motivations are for writing. That will help, if you've got a combination of motivators, that's one of the steps towards flow.

Another is what kind of person you are, your attitudes. You can say personality, but it's more attitudes. Are you open-minded? Can you allow yourself to be creative? Can you take risks in your thinking, and we'll talk more about risk, but can you take risks in your thinking or are you only going to follow a formula? Even though many magazines want a formula, it's not quite as simple as it sounds. You've got to be able to give them a fresh take on their old formula.

KENNEALLY: In fact, Joe was saying very much the same thing. You have to be willing to take that risk and ask them, if you will, to take it out, but you've got to be there ready to do that first.

PERRY: Yes. I've put some really fun anecdotes in some of my writing that kept me engaged that got cut later, but they served the purpose of keeping me writing. I wrote one once, an article for *Psychology Today*, about flow, and I gave an example of oh, you know, a snitty little anecdote about my ex-husband. They took it out, but it was such fun to put it in there. (laughter) It wasn't nasty, but it was so appropriate, and they took it out. I'll use it somewhere else.

KENNEALLY: The book interviewed something like 76 writers, poets, and fiction writers.

PERRY: Novelists –

KENNEALLY: Novelists. But I think most of our audience here, a preponderance, would be nonfictional.

PERRY: Are most people interested in nonfiction primarily here?

KENNEALLY: Fair to say? Well, perhaps both.

PERRY: Maybe both. OK.

KENNEALLY: But yet, your work is entirely nonfiction. Can you talk about how flow is something that can be achieved, and then the creativity, and the self-rewarding experience can be achieved in something that seems so prosaic as a piece of journalism?

PERRY: You mustn't think of it as prosaic just because it's prose. (laughter) Yeah, I have also written poems and had one published, and I've written some short stories that I haven't seriously attempted to market, but it's been nonfiction to this point for the last 23 years, mainly.

It's the same process. Flow is the same process with anything. You find that the – one of the main keys is to find the novelty. We talked about motivation. We talked about a kind of writers' personality, and one other bit of which is being resilient, learning how to handle rejection and not take it personally. Very important.

And the other pieces of flow are learning how to loosen up and focus in both, at the same time. And that is the tricky part. That's the touchy-feely part.

And I do it in nonfiction all of the time. You find your own rituals and techniques. Music is an excellent one. You asked me how to get into flow, you found it. Music works. Carolyn See in her novels, but this works for nonfiction too, chooses an album for each of her novels. She goes shopping, picks an album she likes, and she plays that throughout the writing. She cannot play it in the car, or it'll put her into a trance.

Now, novelists may more readily get into a deep flow, trance state. Maybe you won't with nonfiction, and maybe you will. It depends on the kind of nonfiction. For me, and many others – there's just so many exceptions to everything – but I get into flow, almost into it – call it a trance – in the editing. Once I know I've got enough words, I can relax. Relaxation is absolutely key.

So, got an article to do, and I've done my research, and I've scribbled a bunch of words into the file, and I see, "Oh, great I've got 2,000 and I only need 1500." Oh, it's gravy from there on in. And I don't care what time it is, I'm just going to keep on working because I'm sculpting that. It's my style. It's just a matter of getting rid of the excess. I work that way.

We all have our own way to work, and another key to flow is knowing yourself, knowing what your way is, not saying – like so many people do – "I should be writing five hours a day. I shouldn't go back over each line before I go to the next line." Some people do, and they want each line to be perfect. Some people are paralyzed by that. "If I keep going back over that line, I'll never get to the next line." Then, don't. Force yourself onto the next and the next and the next. Set a timer. Make yourself do a thousand words a day, 500 words, just keep starting – all of these are tidbits that work for people. If you can't finish something, OK, just keep starting. If you start again each day, or every other day, or even once a week, if you put in one hour a week, you're eventually going to have something.

So I have a kind of liberating message. I don't believe that writing has to be work. I hate the word discipline. And yet, I've accomplished a lot. I've been tormented by procrastination my whole life, as many, many writers are. It works anyway, if you find what engages you in the particular piece.

KENNEALLY: So, I was going to ask you how you can use this technique to overcome, or flow over, or around, or something like that, a writer's block. Can you talk about that briefly?

PERRY: You have to look at what kind of block it supposedly is. Is it a block where you can't write for months? You might have to go deep down and find out what are you afraid of. Fear is a big thing that comes up. Another might be just a sort of a temporary block. OK, I'm sitting here, I'm sitting here, nothing's coming. Maybe it's because you're trying to start at the beginning, and you can't start at the beginning. Start at the end. Put the words "Dear Diary" at the beginning. "Dear Diary, I'm having a devil of a time writing this, and what I really want to say is this, but I'm scared of this." Kind of ease into it, later take that beginning off.

We have some many constraints. The marketplace gives us plenty of constraints, but if put those on ourselves right at the beginning, then we're paralyzed and can't write. Most blocks come from some sort of fear. Afraid it won't sell. Well, no, it's not going to if you don't write it. Afraid that if I write it it won't be good enough to sell. Well, that's ridiculous, because being good has nothing to do with selling. It only has a little bit to do with selling. It's true these days.

KENNEALLY: Yeah. Susan, thanks a lot. We'll talk about it some more. Thank you, Susan. (applause)

And the last panelist we'll chat with is Charlie Trowbridge. Charlie is manager, Editorial Office Systems and Services, for John Wiley & Sons. For the past twenty years, he's worked in the U.S. and in Europe in the scientific/technical/medical publishing market, both for major corporations and independently, in editorial and production, with journals and books. So, that's really covered the waterfront.

TROWBRIDGE: There it is.

KENNEALLY: He's now working on the development and implantation of Web-based authoring tools, as well as content acquisition and review systems for the entire Wiley STM program, which consists of nearly 330 journal titles and 20 major reference works. Charlie's appetite for the scientific literature formed after he worked as an assistant to the entomologists for the Middlesex County Mosquito Commission. (laughter)

TROWBRIDGE: New Jersey.

KENNEALLY: In Edison, New Jersey. And in fact, Charlie, you can tell us later about just how you were a professional victim, I think.

TROWBRIDGE: That's exactly right. I was.

KENNEALLY: But, the first thing I want to do is point out, as far as for Charlie, a really interesting coincidence, an anniversary. Today is the 50th anniversary of the publication of the two-page, actually one-page article describing the molecular structure of nucleic acids, otherwise known as DNA, by Watson and Crick, in *Nature*. One of those reports or articles that kind of set the world into an entirely new direction, and it's almost impossible to think of about science today, at least biology, without thinking about DNA.

And you can download a copy of the original article. I got this off the NPR site that's devoted to "DNA 50." And you might want to just have a look at it. It's fascinating. It really only goes on for just a little bit more than one-page. I think there's five footnotes, and there's a simple line drawing of the double helix.

And I wanted to ask you Charlie, imagine such a piece written today – let your imagination run wild just for a bit – and tell us what would that paper look like. What would happen if somebody had such a important discovery today, and it were published? What would happen?

TROWBRIDGE: Well, first off, it would travel much more quickly than it does, or than did in 1953. So we have to think a couple of points there. 1953, how long does it take for an idea to travel around the world of scientific discovery, such as the double helix, the structure that everybody was looking for.

How the article would look today – and I don't know how many folks in the audience, and I won't try to divert us too much, are engaged in STM literature at all. Does anybody work in STM? OK. It's a weird environment and particularly trying to place myself in context for authors and editors. It serves a pedagogic function. It's a different kind of environment, in that sense, and authors aren't paid.

It's a unique environment in that way. They're usually writing to advance ideas, and to participate in a kind of group think, I guess you could say. So, what we're trying to do with that literature as publishers, as people who work in the literature, is hook it up to everything.

So today, Watson and Crick's article would, for instance, all the references – you said there were five or six or something like that – they'd directly linked – you'd be able to go, if you're reading that article, directly from that reference to that article. A thing that might have taken you, certainly would have taken you some hours to do –

KENNEALLY: Including a trip to the library, or something like that.

TROWBRIDGE: A trip to the library, maybe you have to make a request to the librarian. I mean, everybody – *Nature* the journal or the magazine, if you will, *Nature* is the equivalent of let's say *Time Magazine* in the scientific world. It's the largest

circulation. It's top of the hill. You've got *Nature*, and you've got *Science*. Oh, but the scientific literature's actually composed of thousands, literally, of small, primary data journals, and the research that lead up to Watson and Crick's statement in *Nature*, you would have access. You would have that all kind of arterialized, so you'd be looking at that article. So you'd be able to go directly from their article to the articles that lead up to it. For instance, I think there's an illustration in there that should be attributed to a woman whose name was Rosalyn Franklin –

KENNEALLY: Right.

TROWBRIDGE: – whose work was really seminal in advancing their modeling escapades. So, you would be linked directly to her work. You'd be able to explore it. So whatever kind of caught your fancy, and science is still kind of, it seems to me, a serendipitous activity.

KENNEALLY: And even the response you might have to it could be happening, if not in real-time, but in something much closer to that, than say in 1953 writing a letter to the editor, if you will.

TYROWBRIDGE: Oh, tremendously. It's the – well, for instance, I mean, I think I mentioned this to you earlier, today we have the SARS thing going on, so here scientific literature. I mean, it took Watson and Crick and all the predecessors that helped them get to the point that they finally arrived at decades to march to this discovery. Within a matter of weeks, we've identified a pathogen in the SARS case. Identified it. We have its genome already, so we've already drilled into the molecular level of that creature – and it is, essentially, another creature – analyzed it, and have established that it's mutating. And we've done within a matter of weeks. That might have taken decades. So the velocity at which we're traveling right now as a species, thinking of ourselves as one species among many, is increasing in terms of our awareness of things and so on and so forth.

KENNEALLY: And I think that puts us to the point I wanted to talk with you next, and why I think that what's going on in your field is a kind of leading edge to what will eventually happen in all kinds of writing, and happening elsewhere, even now, and that is, there's a collaboration going on here. Work is much less a singular act, and much more a communal act when something is published. Can you talk about that? Talk about how the technology, what you're developing, is making that even more efficient.

TROWBRIDGE: Well, just to explain to everybody, in case they don't all know about peer review and how it operates. Any article that appears in any – practically any – reputable scientific journal has been reviewed by at least two other scientists. Perhaps blindly – so you may know, if you're the author of that particular article, you may know who's reviewing your article – all journals do it differently. It's a world of diversity out there. Some people in exposing the reviewers to the author;

other people believe that neither author nor reviewer should know who the other person is. You have this called a double-blind review.

And what I do is basically put up systems that facilitate all of that over the Web, so people can collaborate, and that's the other half of the Web. And I think that's a really crucial point to make. Publishers first seized the Web as a mean of distribution, so it's kind of a static thing. Everybody said, "Oh, my God, here's the Web, let's put our content up," and the content's kind of a static object. Well now, the real purpose of the Web, if you go all the way back to the Department of Defense, which is really the birth place of it, was for the facilitation of remote collaboration.

And so now, we're starting to really, as publishers, engage in that, and allow this fellow in Tokyo to be almost in real-time with somebody who's in Johns Hopkins in Baltimore. And they can exchange ideas in a 24-hour period, like I said, that might have taken a decade to – a decade would have been putting it conservatively, I mean, 1953 was even pretty speedy, but – so that's the kind of technology that I'm engaged with –

KENNEALLY: And when you talk about it, you communicate to me, at least, a real enthusiasm, and when you discussed it with me before, it's been about getting in contact with the source of the discovery. That that's what's really keeping you going. Maybe that's the flow of the Charlie Trowbridge finds himself in, when he's with some of these editors and writers.

TROWBRIDGE: Yeah.

KENNEALLY: Talk about that.

TROWBRIDGE: Yeah. Yeah, no, I mean, I really – I think that's when you first saw me I was talking at a conference of STM people, and I was trying to actually see if anybody in the audience was awake, and Christopher apparently was awake. And I said, you know, the way I psych myself up for my job, why I like my job, is because I'm helping to, –I'm contributing to that increase in speed. And I love working with the people who are in – I mean, it's taken me all over the world. I've come in contact with people who have some pretty wild ideas about things. So, I'm staring at those ideas, but at the same time, I'm helping to build something, and I feel like I'm making a contribution.

When I was working at the Mosquito Commission, I felt a little absurd, and I was looking for something to make me feel a little about "job," and certainly doing that has put me in the flow. I would definitely resonate with that.

KENNEALLY: And it's, I think, a process too – the technology's allowing, the way you described it, the relationships of the publishing stream to be renewed, to be strengthened, so that you've got authors, and editors, and the peer review process,

and so forth, that the technology – and that’s why you’re excited. It just is putting it on a level that it has not been on in the past. Is that how you feel?

TROWBRIDGE: Well, yeah. It’s definitely – it hasn’t been there in the past, or I think that the scientific publishers have kind of gone to sleep about it for a while, maybe for the past 30 or 40 years, and they’re kind of waking up again to this. And when you go into an editorial office now, an editor – in contrast to the nonfiction world and the fiction world, in particular – well, the fiction world, it might actually hold true – like I said, it’s a pedagogic function.

A good scientific journal, if I’m a guy – even if I get rejected – I come away feeling good, because what I’m going to get from that editorial office – the function of the scientific journal editor – is to give you a tutorial about, “OK. Your methodology here in this area is wrong. The data in Table 2 does not actually support what you’re saying. Maybe you ought to look at Kenneally’s work on such and such and such and such.” And we’re now wiring that all up for people, but we haven’t been there for a long time, for a long time, we’ve just kind of said, they were out there, we’re paying them, and we put up – we distribute, we’re the masters of distribution. Now, we’re actually engaged in helping people do it better, do it faster, both authors and editors. So, an author can kind of come in, upload his or her article, an editor can grab the article off, check it off, share it with a couple of people, bring back comments, and push things along in a very short period of time.

KENNEALLY: To me, it sounds like a process that could work in other areas than just STM. I mean, if people had the opportunity to really see what the editor was doing, it would solve one of Joe’s problems, which he talked about, which is getting the access. The access would be there, maybe not at that exact moment, but – you know what I’m trying to say? It would be right there in front of you tonight. I could look and see your comments, and really hear you maybe in some digital streaming thing talk about the piece. That kind of thing is I think very exciting, and maybe we’ll see it creep into other areas of publishing.

TROWBRIDGE: Right. You also have rejected material that is not really wasted, I mean, a lot of times. At least 20 to 30% of what we get is rejected, but the dialogue that takes place around rejected material, in science anyway, can be a very fertile ground, so we’re getting a little look into that.

KENNEALLY: When I did see you speak the first time, you said that we were – we had transitioned from a stone age to a bronze age, if you will. Can you talk about where we’re going? Can you give us a preview of whatever follows?

TROWBRIDGE: Well, the main thing for me is real-time steering that actually there will be this ability to see in real-time what’s happening, essentially what happens in our bodies, or what happens to you when you drive a car. You’re sitting in front of a car, and you’re getting real-time feedback from the car about, “Yeah, this is how fast I’m going; that’s how much gas I have,” and so on and so forth. Eventually,

we should be able to drive science in the same way. And I don't mean to overuse that metaphor. That's where I see us going. That's what this is all about. We're in the bronze age, meaning the tools I have right now are imperfect. I'm constantly running up against patterns of human behavior that I cannot imitate in a software environment, but which I need to be able to imitate, because of the way we operate.

KENNEALLY: Is that the goal then to try to get the software to mimic the human – ?

TROWBRIDGE: Yeah. You're trying to get it to be, or you're trying to get it to not confine or constrain the way that humans communicate with one another.

KENNEALLY: We all know what that's like. Like if we ever try to buy a book on Amazon.com, we can feel sometimes constrained by the software.

TROWBRIDGE: Absolutely. And everybody's had that experience, and I have certainly, sitting on top of a help desk that's very active. I've plenty of people in there saying, "You and your stupid Website, would you please – " and I'm being very polite, I'm not using a lot of the expletives that people have used coming into my environment. But we're getting there. It's just going to take a little while, but we're going to get there.

KENNEALLY: Great. Thank you, Charlie. (applause)

I think those chats have gotten us to a great place to continue the conversation. First, I want to invite you to take a quick break. Five minutes. We have some drinks outside: refreshments. If you need a bathroom, it's out the back here, and I believe, the women's room is on that side, stage left, and the men's room is around the corner to the left. So, we'll see you back here in five minutes. Thank you.

END OF TAPE