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Voiceover: Welcome to Author Platform Rocket, the highly acclaimed source for actionable business, marketing, and mindset strategy for authors, delivered in 20 minutes or less, most of the time. In other words, this is how you sell more books while building a bigger fan base, the right way. And here's your host, and author, marketing veteran Jonny Andrews.

Jonny Andrews: Hey, hey what is up? It's that Jonny Andrews fellow, and today we are still in the interview series, and have a really good one for you today. Our guest at this time has a kind of fun past. He's a aspiring rockstar, turned seven-time number one best selling author in fitness and personal development Two things that I really, really like. And he has a proven process that took him from struggling author to selling over 50,000 books, and we're going to be talking a lot about some of those tactics, tricks, techniques, and all of the things that got him to be where he is today.

And this is time to introduce here the good man, Derek Doepker. How you doing?

Derek Doepker: I'm doing well. How are you doing, Jonny?

Jonny Andrews: I have zero complaints. And one thing that I really like to do in the beginning of this, is sort of like what's your hero's journey? What is the thing where you came from that got you to be where you are today? And don't skip the dirty, evil, gross stuff. That's where everyone gets interested.

Derek Doepker: Okay. Yeah, so definitely some literally dirty stuff. When I moved out to Los Angeles, living in an apartment with a hoarder, which was a really disgusting place, but I was so broke at the time that's pretty much the only option I could find. So I came out to LA back in ... shortly after graduating college to become a rockstar. So my background was not as a writer. It was not as a marketer. I was sleeping on an air mattress for a couple years, and during that time I was studying. As I'm sure you can imagine, and many people can relate to, I want to do something that I love for a living, which is music, but it was also helping others, sharing about fitness and personal development, and get paid for it. So those of you can relate, it was like how can I share my gift, share my passion, and get compensated for it?

Most of what I was doing wasn't working, so I spent a couple years trying blogging, creating YouTube videos, affiliate marketing, buying these courses that were promising to make me rich overnight and didn't work. The first sort of introduction into the world of book publishing came when I got a package in the mail. I had posted on a blog a comment, and I won a Kindle e-reader. I got this Kindle e-reader, I'm like, I had written this 350-page fitness guide that I could barely sell to my own family and friends, which was pretty soul-crushing to put months and months of work into something and not have it sell.

I got the Kindle e-reader, so then I decided, well I'm going to take some of the writing and publish a book. So I published my first book on Kindle, and right out of the gate, first book I published sold about three copies. I'm pretty sure one copy was to my mom, so I was like okay, this isn't really going to set me free here. About this time, I remember, I'm so struggling, I'm looking around my apartment thinking, what can I sell? I got my air mattress and my computer. I have my guitars. I don't have a lot of stuff to get rid of. So I look over, I see my prized music keyboard from college, and I'm like, okay, I don't absolutely need it. I love, but I don't need it.

So I get on Craigslist. I watch the guy walk out the door with my keyboard, get 200 bucks so I could pay the rent that month. And it's just this feeling of ... I remember thinking, I was told by a retired principal when I was younger, when I said I wanted to become a musician, he's like, "You'll become a starving artist." And I'm like, "Here I am the starving artist." I swore it wouldn't happen and I watched the keyboard go out the door, and I'm like, "I gotta figure this out", because it was like this is what I get for going after my dreams.

I got through that. Just a quick mindset thing for anyone who has been struggling. I told myself ... I kept myself going 'cause I'm like, "This is all part of my before and after story." Literally right now, it is my before story. So, I kept

going and I was like I'm gonna keep trying some thing. I published my second book. This time I actually sold a few copies to strangers, which was cool. It still didn't make me any money. And then I finally went to a seminar where I really feel like I got the missing piece. That was learning about influence. Learning about relationship building. Real business tactics, and I worked with a lot of authors who were studying self-publishing which is great, but as you know, Jonny, it's like really business principles and marketing principles that carry over into authoring that make a difference.

When I attended that seminar, I came out, I was fired up. I just had this feeling inside me like there's this other book I wanna write and I don't know if it's gonna sell or not. My intuition ... something ... I was getting this download of this book that I wanted to put out. So within a few weeks, I had written the book, launched the book, and used all the different skills that I had learned in that book "50 Fitness Tips You Wish You Knew" went on to become a number one best-seller in weight loss. Generated almost six thousand dollars in royalties in 11 days. This was December 2012.

So, when I had that breakthrough I login, I see hundreds of sales coming in which had never happened before, and right away I knew I gotta share with other authors what I figured out. Because I was not told all the little sort of missing links that it took to achieve that breakthrough. So, I then said, "One, I'm gonna do this again", so then I went on to publish multiple books that became best-sellers. Every since a few months after I had my breakthrough, I was teaching authors and I've helped since then thousands of authors with training courses and things, coaching on how they could have a best-selling book. And that's what I've been doing ever since.

Jonny Andrews: All right. I like that. One thing that I really appreciate about that is how you said, you know, when you were in that tight spot, you said, "This is my before story." I did exactly the same thing. That is so cool. I love it. I remember when I was like homeless and living in the back of my car between this tiny little office. People would ask me, "Why are you doing this to yourself?" I'm like, "Because this is the story ... you've got to have a story to be able to tell your grandchildren. Like this is the beginning of it." I was so over the top. It was great. No, it's awesome.

Derek Doepker: Yeah, and what's funny about that is sometimes that happens. Going through it was so painful, and then sometimes looking back, for myself, and I've heard other people, almost like kind of wish it were, but maybe if it were a little worse, it'd be like even more compelling, which is so interesting how that happens for some people I've actually seen. They're like, "I almost wish I had a worse story beforehand because then that would be like more compelling or whatever."

Jonny Andrews: Right.

Derek Doepker: It's just one of those things.

Jonny Andrews: Oh, no. I hear you on that one. In fact, one of my consulting clients probably has it worse than anyone I've ever met that he all within this tiny little time period ended up getting cancer, his wife left him, he was a hundred thousand dollars in debt, he lost all his belongings in a flood, and then he lost his job, and then within two years he turned it all completely around. I'm not saying that his mindset cured his cancer, but I'm definitely saying like he went through some stuff. If I'm gonna kick some boxes on having a crappy before story, I'm like he wins. He takes the prize.

Derek Doepker: Oh, yeah. It's hard to beat that guy.

Jonny Andrews: Oh, totally. I mean that was the more than a trifecta of lunacy. That's a good point. The folks who are listening, if you're struggling with something, this is part of the journey. That is what it always is. Even after you've hit a nice spot in whatever you're trying to do. There's still going to be ups and downs. There's still gonna be good years, bad years, good months, bad months. Whatever it is, you're gonna have to look at that for what is which is the rest of the journey. So, tell us a little about what you're cooking on right now. Give us a breakdown on what authors can do to help themselves launch themselves from where they are.

Derek Doepker: The two biggest things that I've been most excited about for the past I'd say about two years or so that have made the biggest difference for me and my business, my book sales was first of all, how to get more consistent sales. One of the challenges that I had experienced and many authors had gone through is like okay, even if you can launch a book to best-seller status through promotions and discount book sites and Bookbub and stuff like that. How do you get consistent sales day in and day out?

The two biggest things that have helped with that the first one would be Amazon marketing services ads, and that's one of the things that I found your work, Jonny, with AMS and Facebook ads, so advertising, just depending on the genre, but advertising is definitely something I recommend authors get into and finding the right platform for you. And then the other thing, and I just read an article on this the other day, sales have increased 30% in the last year of audio books. So, I got into audio books a couple years back. When I did my first audio book that I did myself actually, so it was technically the second audio book. I put it up and I kinda forgot about it for a few weeks. I logged back in and it made like 85 sales. And I wasn't doing any marketing or promotion for it outside of just whatever I already had in place just going to my Kindle book. So, I was like, "Oh, that's cool. Well, maybe it's just 'cause it's the new book." Well, months go by and that book continued to sell over 100 copies a month pretty consistent.

Then I was like, "Okay, so this is proven to work." I kinda wanted to test the waters a little bit. Started getting more of my books on audio book and notice a similar thing. It's like organically, because I imagine there's less competition with audio books. It's a growing market. All these factors and it's like these books that

I put out there are audio book have continued to sell consistently without doing again, really any extra marketing or promotion on top of what I was already doing before. So, it's like organic sales, semi-passively. Of course, this comes from building a little bit of a platform, but some of the book they might not sell as much on Kindle, but they're still selling in audio book format. So, those are the two big things that I think most authors it makes sense if you have a book that is suited for audio, so not like a picture book. If you have a book that's suited for audio, I think this is really the thing to get into right now.

Jonny Andrews: Absolutely, and what I like about that is more than likely when you're running your advertisement, you're gonna happen across folks who are more into the audio than they are reading, which I raise my hand on that one, 'cause you get hectic and it's just sort of like, "Oh, I have to be at the gym. I can't really read book on a Stair Master and hate my life. I can't even watch the words, but I can listen to someone talk to me. That seems pleasant." I think a lot of people are doing that now, especially during commutes and things like that. To work, they're listening to more podcasts and more audio books and stuff. That makes a ton of sense and also isn't there something ... I've never really spent a lot of time looking at this, but isn't Whispersync, isn't that what they call it where you buy say the book, then you get the audio or vice versa?

Derek Doepker: Yeah, so it can sync up between the Kindle and the audio book, so you bring up a great point that there's many people out there who will only get audio book versions of a book, which is actually how I first thought about it, because I was telling a friend about it, and she was like, "Yeah, I'll get your book if it's an audio book. I only listen to audio books." I was like, "Huh, maybe I need to do that." Then I started hearing from more and more people about like they just listen to audio books.

Then, here's what you're talking about, Jonny, where there's Whispersync. So, they'll sync up the Kindle edition with the audio book. So, if you listen to chapter three in the audio book, and then you open up the Kindle edition, it'll start back up at chapter three or wherever you left off in the audio book edition. Then you read to chapter four, and you open up the audio book and it'll play at chapter four. Right, it syncs back and forth from the audio to the Kindle edition when it's Whispersync, which means there's people now who will buy potentially two versions of your book. The audio and the Kindle, so now you're making two sales instead of just one. Or in some cases some people might only want to buy a book if it has both of those. So, another perk is besides reaching the readers who will just want the audio book, you're now reaching people who will buy multiple versions of your book again, with the same amount of marketing or whether they find it organically or whatever, you're now making extra sales.

Jonny Andrews: Absolutely. The other thing I like about the audio book market, is it's not like the Kindle market where you know, if you look at self-published ISBNs what was that 2016, they were just shy eight thousand published, which is lunacy. And I'm willing to bet that there's probably well into the millions at this point. So, you

look at this as just this epically flooded market whereas audio books, I think there's a lot more room to grow in there 'cause there's less competition.

Derek Doepker: Exactly and that's what I've seen. That's one of the reasons I would think that some of the audio books have done well, because I look at even just organic search results. One of my audio books is not still in the same position, but when it launched for a while it was like one of the first results for the search term weight loss. Like, just that term.

Jonny Andrews: I'm sure that didn't help at all.

Derek Doepker: Nah, I don't know if it made a difference or not, but maybe. Maybe a few people are searching for weight loss.

Jonny Andrews: Yeah, one or two of them.

Derek Doepker: Yeah, and so, it's like, "How is that possible?" Again, because it doesn't have the millions of other self-published authors that are competing there. Yeah, there are some other people, but it's just still one of those areas where what's great again, as a mindset is even though audio books are ... there are some simple ways to get them created. And multiple options for different budgets, and I talk about it. I teach on it. Still though, a lot of authors, they just don't know about it. Or they don't know how practical it can be, so it's because it's that extra little hurdle, right? The fact whether real or perceived, a little bit more of an obstacle or barrier to get into audio books, that to me is like the greatest thing is when there's an obstacle, because to me that weeds out the people who won't take that extra step, which means if you were more committed or if you're willing to learn how to do it and get an audio book created, then you get past all that potential competition.

Jonny Andrews: You are now my new favorite person, because you said those things. I just sort of what to reiterate that. If you want to find places where you can absolutely become a rockstar, it's exactly what he just said. You want to look for the places where other people refuse to go. Like that's sort of the defining definition almost of how to become a successful entrepreneur. Do things others are unwilling to do. It looks like a little bit extra work maybe it's a little harder logistically or something like that. Whatever the story is you're telling yourself, the reason you're not maybe where you want to be is 'cause you're not taking that step. You're not crossing that threshold that might look suspiciously like work. I don't know? It's just suspicious there. I think I smell something, and it smells like a task. But that's where the loot lives if you're looking to expand your business, and especially with audio books. I think it's wonderful that it's a little bit harder to put out an audio book.

But I know you train on this stuff, so if there's just a couple of tips to help maybe move one or two human beings over that threshold, what are some tips that you

can give 'em to kind of maybe help them see this more correctly for what it is, and then maybe get them to eyeball some next steps?

Derek Doepker:

Sure thing. Two basic things to understand. The first of all is: How do you get distribution for the audio book? The second thing is: How do you actually get the audio book created?

I'll actually start with the distribution, because if anyone listening, if you are familiar with ACX, which is Audio Book Creation Exchange, then it's only for a few different countries, and what ACX does is it pushes your book out to Amazon, Audible, and iTunes. So, for those of you who aren't familiar with the audio book market, the way it works. You don't actually upload a book to Audible. You would upload it to a place like ACX, then they put it on Audible. So, that's like the standard way it's done.

ACX is, for those in the U.S., the U.K., and off the top of my head I believe they might be Ireland now and I think Canada are the four countries. So, they've just expanded, so you can double check on that. I bet those are the four currently at the time of this recording. They're opening up and expanding to different places. So, if you're not in one of those countries, or you're not in any ACX country, some authors are like, "Well, I really don't have an option."

Well, the good news is you do have an option. So, there's authorsrepublic.com, and I'm sure we can get this in the show notes, so authorsrepublic.com. And that will get you distribution from anywhere in the world. So, if anyone has ever thought "Well, I'm not sure based off where I live." It's all good. You can do it from anywhere. So, once you know that you can do it from anywhere, next thing is how do you get them created? In a nutshell, you can hire a narrator, which they'll do all the work. They'll produce it. So, it's pretty simple to do that at the same time it's also gonna be the most pricey. So, we're talking about a few hundred to into the thousands of dollars to hire a narrator. Different places ACX, UpWork, number of options to find a narrator.

Another thing that can be done with a narrator is a royalty split. And a royalty split is where this is just through ACX, but you would go to a narrator and say, "Okay, I'm not gonna pay you anything out of pocket. We're just gonna split the royalties 50/50." We can get into this if you want, Jonny, some of the more tactics with what you can do with an audio book. I'll just say that, quick tip, using your audio book as a bonus is a really cool thing that you can do. Bonus for purchases. Bonus for signing up for an email list. And you can't do that with a royalty split, plus you're losing half your royalties and things, so it is an option on a really limited budget, but I don't typically recommend it. It also means you'll be locked into a seven year contract with ACX where you can't go anywhere else, so that's the reason.

Jonny Andrews: Wow. That's a whole bunch of reasons not to do that. It's free; however, it's the comma however moment after that that kind of makes me pucker just a little bit. Absolutely.

Derek Doepker: Yeah, and like you were talking about, Jonny, this mindset of the [inaudible 00:18:22] holiday, the obstacle's the way, where the idea that like through the obstacles or through the barriers are actually the greatest opportunities. Well, another mindset is short term and long term thinking. So, if you look at you know, really highly successful businesses. Even Amazon for instance, how long did they lose money, right? Playing the long game though? So, now they're like taking over the world.

Jonny Andrews: They literally are. On that point, these folks played the long game so long and so well, that they're now competing with Google, Facebook, and Apple, like all of the major companies and in different ways in terms of what they're able to accomplish and deliver to a group of literally the most captive audience on the planet. So, there is a massive testimonial for playing the long game.

Derek Doepker: Exactly. Yeah, so if you think about the long game, that's where the cost really comes in and the consequences of the royalty split. Then the third option which is one I do now, and definitely makes sense for many authors just 'cause it's affordable. It's doable. You can learn the process pretty simply. Even I've taught a number of people who are like, "I'm totally tech phobic. I am not into technology at all." And they learn how to record an audio book themselves. So, you can do it yourself. And equipment can be 100, 150 dollars and then you're set. Then it's just a matter of doing it yourself, learning the free software, like Audacity.

Another quick tip on this is that if you ever, you know, might think, "Well, that's a little bit of my time though" to do it yourself, and it is a little bit more of your time. What I found though is if you ever read through a book, especially if you have a new book coming out, if you proofread it and yes, I would recommend sending it to an editor too, but if you ever read through your book, then you can read through it out loud as you're doing your final pass through it, and then record the audio book. That's exactly what I did for my last book was I was going through the final proofread, and I was just reading it out loud, like taking care of two birds with one stone, which was, okay I'm going through it. I'm catching some mistakes, so I can go back and redo it. I'm catching things the editor didn't catch while I'm reading through it out loud. And I'm getting my audio book recorded at which point I just needed to do some extra editing at the end.

So, it's actually not even going to be as much extra time. It still can fit pretty well into a process that you might already be doing as an author.

Jonny Andrews: Yeah, that's actually really cool. I like that multiple birds, one stone thing. And you know, just to really quickly speak on the equipment, because I went through this recently. Not with an audio book, but with video. I was like all right, I gotta

step up my video game, so I need to start getting this studio lighting and camera and all this other crazy stuff. I gotta tell you something, I was kinda surprised, and this is just what happens in consumer electronics, the longer these things have been around and the more people that put them out, the cheaper this stuff gets, and you do not need. I had forgotten that. That's been true forever.

Case in point, flat screen TVs, like look at what these things are. I remember this was oceans of time ago. I was doing an internship, and I was at an event and Sony was unveiling the first flat screen ... it was either Samsung or Sony, and it was a 25 thousand dollar television that I think might have been 37 inches, and the two guys who took it out of the box had this look of concentration and horror on their faces 'cause they knew if either one of them slipped up even a little bit their jobs would be over. It was just like this thing was like little fat babies on strings with light from heaven, "Ahhh", kind of stuff. They were literally wearing white gloves as they took it out and put it on the display table. You could tell that really made an impression on them, like "Ooh, a flat screen."

But now you can get these things for like 200 bucks and they're huge, and they come with like you know, things that listen to your conversations and report you to the FBI. So, it's really amazing what the technology does. You're like let's loosely drop this crazy talk right at the end there, it's perfect. Yeah, so don't worry. Don't get scared like about the technology and stuff. Number one it is super easy to do these things. Number two, the equipment if you don't already own it, is ridiculously affordable, because it's been in existence for oceans of time and it's evolved to work with your computer. You won't have any trouble doing it. So, don't let that kind of catch you up.

Awesome. Derek, I wanted to thank you. You know, we're coming up to the end here. I wanted to thank you so much for doing this, because I actually, I've been taking some notes here because I have a book coming out in a little bit using this weird process that I developed. So I'm thinking, yeah, this guy's got a point. I'm gonna do this in audio. And so guess what? I'm gonna do this in audio. It's gonna be lovely. So, thank you really very much. Thank you for coming on. How can people find out more about you and your stuff?

Derek Doepker: Yeah, well thanks for having me on, Jonny. You can find out more at bestsellersecrets.com. I have a free book called "Why Authors Fail". You can check that out. And for those interested in learning more about audio books, the different options, the breakdown of the exact equipment that you can use to record it yourself, how that process works, what that's all about. There's a webinar you can check out at bestsellersecrets.com/audiobookswebinar.

Jonny Andrews: Which I'm taking notes on this, so bestsellersecrets.com/audiobookswebinar and folks, yes, as usual I'm gonna put all these links in the show notes. So, if you're a fan of clicking on links, you can find the links to click right there.

All right, so head to the show notes.

And Derek, once again, thank you so much. I personally learned a ton. I hope everybody did.

Derek Doepker: Yeah, thanks again, man.

Jonny Andrews: Awesome. We'll chat soon.

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I'm Jonny Andrews and that's it for today. I'll see you on the next show.

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