

## NAME

2023-03-29 Pit Stop Picnic.mp3

## DATE

April 13, 2023

## DURATION

58m 19s

## 11 SPEAKERS

Karen Commins

Amy Johnson

Speaker3

Sarah

Speaker5

Tamara

Speaker7

Steve

Speaker9

Speaker10

Speaker11

## START OF TRANSCRIPT

**[00:00:03] Karen Commins**

Hello and welcome to the Pit Stop, your fortnightly mid-week rest area to refuel your drive. I'm Karen Commins. I'm an audiobook narrator and chief cartographer for narrators roadmap.com. And I'm your host for Pit Stop. My friend Anne Flosnik is not with me today. I'm actually driving solo, but hopefully we'll still have a good time every other Wednesday. Audiobook narrators who do more than narrate Pull into the Pit Stop and they're sure to inspire you to follow your interests and use all of your talents and gifts. This conversation will be recorded so you'll be able to relisten or catch parts you missed. Feel free to comment in the chat. Raise your hand if you want to be part of the conversation. And I hope you want to be part of the conversation because I'm actually doing a picnic today. There's so many people traveling and at other events and wasn't sure who would be available, so I thought we could just have a chat amongst ourselves of people who have news to share, or if you want ideas about how to do things or the sky's the limit. It was a picnic and you bring the topic and I'm glad to welcome you all here today. Who would like to go first? You can raise your hand. You can type something in the chat. I didn't attend via Atlanta, but I was a sponsor and I took stuff down there the other day and then I had to go pick up the leftovers.

**[00:01:32] Karen Commins**

There were so many people at the convention. I saw they had over a thousand people. And I would love to hear anybody's experience if you were there. Also, APAC happened this week. The Audio Publishers conference happened yesterday. Guess I'm losing track of my days. And if you were there and want to talk about that, I'd love to hear about your experiences. There's a conference happening right now, the flock conference where I've been this morning, and I'll be returning there after Pitstop concludes. And so some of you may be attending that as well. So many things going on this week. And I'm just so happy to see all of you here with me this afternoon. So does anybody have a topic you'd like to raise or would love to hear from you? This is an open chat. I don't I don't see any raised hands and I don't see anything in the chat. So, I mean, I can babble, but it'd be so much more interesting to hear from all of you. So what's been going on in your. Amy has something to say. I would love to hear what that is. I've sent you the mic, Amy.

**[00:02:55] Amy Johnson**

I don't know that. Okay? I haven't done this in a long time, so I'm forgetting. Can you hear me? I can hear you. Great. Oh, terrific. Okay. Um, I also did not go to the events this week, so apologies for not continuing on that topic. And no, that's mean.

**[00:03:13] Karen Commins**

I'm just throwing starters out there. We're talking about whatever you want.

**[00:03:18] Amy Johnson**

Um, actually, I was excited for this open picnic because, um, I followed in some of your footsteps on trying to create my own path, and. Excellent. Have gotten stuck. Okay. Um, one is, so I've been trying to get the rights to a book that was written in the 30s, and I've gone through kind of a crazy goose chase. And the last one that I went through, they. They told me the rights holder was actually UNICEF and they hold the rights to the book. Really? Yes.

**[00:03:55] Karen Commins**

That's not an answer you'd expect.

**[00:03:58] Amy Johnson**

Oh, no. That was like I thought, what? Unicef? So I wrote to their like form. They had one of those email forms. Um, so I did that and I didn't hear anything back. And so part of me is like, okay, I need to look for an email address. I got distracted and I've been doing other things now, But have you ever, like tried to get rights through something by going through an email form? Or just what do you do when you get stuck? Do you go to the estate or something? Because so the author has died and, uh, and even her family, her child, her kid died in the early 2000. So there's an estate. And so I'm trying to think if I should write the estate or try again with UNICEF now or I don't know, what do you do when you get.

**[00:04:53] Karen Commins**

Well, what a conundrum. And. And a lot of these things do take time. So don't feel it almost sounded like you were like, well, life got in the way and I did this and the other. That's what happens. Life gets in the way. And these things do take time. And so don't feel bad on that score. It will just make you that much happier when you're actually able to do it. But hopefully but the email form, you know, and I know you when you entered it, you probably thought, I'm not going to have any success with this and I would doubt that you could. I would go through the estate because and I have. Have you seen my article when the author is six Feet Under?

**[00:05:37] Amy Johnson**

I have a long time ago. I was going to review when I got back to this. Um, but yeah, I will review it.

**[00:05:43] Karen Commins**

Because that, that goes into how I would look for people in the estate. But within UNICEF, if UNICEF actually has. The right. There's somebody in charge of publications or. You know, I would look at their site, but I would also search LinkedIn for somebody at UNICEF.

**[00:06:09] Amy Johnson**

Oh, I never thought about that. Okay.

**[00:06:12] Karen Commins**

Because a forum probably is not going to get you very far, but an actual person. Would have greater chance. Of course they may. They still may not answer you or they may go, What you want? Yeah.

**[00:06:25] Amy Johnson**

Yeah.

**[00:06:28] Karen Commins**

I mean, don't have another answer off the top of my head.

**[00:06:32] Amy Johnson**

That helps. And I will look for it through LinkedIn or check out their estate and maybe try it that way. But I was getting I was like, Oh, I need to revisit this and how do I go about that? And so I was excited for this little open picnic. So thank you.

**[00:06:50] Karen Commins**

Well, I'm excited too, and that's such a great question and certainly one that I have great interest in personally because I love researching this kind of stuff. Yeah. And personally, I would like to talk to the people with associated with the state, the estate, because they would have the most vested interest, I think, in having this work in audio. That's what I would think too. I don't know UNICEF if they're using it for their fundraising ability somehow. That would interest them too, because it would be passive income as far as they're concerned, if you license the rights and then because you would probably pay them in advance. And then once the advance is paid at some point, you know, once it's earned out, at some point you would be paying them royalties.

**[00:07:43] Amy Johnson**

Mhm.

**[00:07:43] Karen Commins**

So. I would try those two routes and. You know, going to the estate. I always start with the obituary. So if you know excuse me if you know that the author's child has passed away, I would look at the child's obituary and see who their survivors are.

**[00:08:06] Speaker3**

Okay.

**[00:08:07] Karen Commins**

Because somewhere along the line, you're going to get to the end of the chain. I mean, it's almost like genealogy. You know? It is genealogy. We're diagraming people's family trees to figure out who owns the rights to something.

**[00:08:24] Speaker3**

Right. Yeah. Okay.

**[00:08:28] Amy Johnson**

Those are. Those. Give me some ideas. And next steps where to go. So thank you.

**[00:08:33] Karen Commins**

Well, thanks for coming with such a great question. And if you want to follow up after you look there and just keep me posted by email because I'd love to know how this turns out and if I can. Think of some other approach you might take. I'd pass it on.

**[00:08:49] Amy Johnson**

Okay. Thank you so much.

**[00:08:51] Karen Commins**

Good luck with that. That sounds like a really exciting project.

**[00:08:55] Amy Johnson**

Hopefully we'll see. Thank you.

**[00:08:59] Karen Commins**

Well, thanks so much.

**[00:09:00] Speaker3**

Sure.

**[00:09:01] Karen Commins**

And I see Sarah has her hand raised, so I'm going to pass the mic to you, Sarah. Except I tapped the wrong thing. There. There you go. Hi, Sarah. Hi. It's nice to picnic. Thank you.

**[00:09:20] Sarah**

The food here is divine.

**[00:09:22] Karen Commins**

Is it? I'm glad you like it because I'm not really much of a cook. You know, I would pick up for the picnic.

**[00:09:31] Sarah**

Um, please excuse me, because I'm quite hoarse from the past few days.

**[00:09:36] Karen Commins**

I can imagine. Where have you been, APAC? Oh.

**[00:09:40] Sarah**

Yes. I came home yesterday in time to drive my child back to school. And then there was a little bit of a whirlwind yesterday, so I've just like. Anyway.

**[00:09:48] Karen Commins**

Not the first time. Or have you been? It was.

**[00:09:50] Sarah**

It was my first time in person. Yeah. Oh, you did the remote one last year? Yeah, the year before. So. Yeah. Yeah, but I just. I just had a question about. And this is just me showing my, my. I don't understand, um, copyright laws and stuff, but if the work was from 1930, is it after the the author has passed that that the that something goes into the public domain or is it. I'm wondering if this book was from 1930 why it's not in the public domain.

**[00:10:23] Karen Commins**

Well, that's a great question. And this goes back to Amy's book. I'm assuming, Amy, you've looked at is has it fallen into the public domain? So that's a great question, Sarah. It's not on the author's death at for books published in 1930 books now its author's death plus 70 years. But copyright law has changed a lot over time. But in 1930, when that book was published, it was they they had they had copyright for 28 years, and they had to renew the copyright by the end of the 28th year to extend the copyright. So that book had to have the copyright renewed by the end of 1958 in order to stay copyrighted or else it'd be public domain, and then Amy could just record it today. And there's places to research to see if it had been renewed. And if they did renew it, then the copyright is extended for 95 years and it's through the entire year. It doesn't change until January 1st. So if the book was published in 1930 and they renewed their copyright at the end of 2025. Is that right? 1930 plus 95 would be 2025. So January 1st, 2026, that book would be in the public domain if the copyright had been renewed. So the renewal goes.

**[00:12:01] Sarah**

Back to the to the publication date and not from where they renewed it from, Right?

**[00:12:09] Karen Commins**

Yes. And this is for the period of books from 1928 through 1963, all have this requirement. And there's there's additional things, too, because if they say they published this book in 1930, but they didn't put the word copyright or the copyright symbol, the C inside the circle, if they just published this book in 1930 and didn't have either of those things, which is called the Copyright notice, it was in the public domain at the end of 1958 because it it would have been at the end of 28 years. It would have fallen in public domain if they didn't do it precisely with the copyright notice. Does that make sense?

**[00:12:56] Sarah**

Yeah. You're amazing.

**[00:12:59] Karen Commins**

Well. Well, I was just talking about public domain books this morning, but it. It all depends on what's the publication date And did they renew it? Did they publish it with the notice? With either the word or the symbol or both. And if it had both of those things, did they renew it by the end of the 28th year to extend their copyright? So if they published it. Without either of those things. It extended copyright expired at the end of 28 years and they couldn't renew it if they published it with both those things and didn't renew it. Copyright still expired at the end of 28 years. If they published it with both those things and did renew it, copyright runs through 95 years. But you actually add one to know which January 1st, it's actually public domain. So for instance, books, all the books published in 1927, in the US this year, January 1st, became public domain. And this tells us books published in 1928 will become public domain, all of them. It doesn't matter if they were renewed or not. You don't have to do any research. They will be public domain on January 1st next year. So January 1st, 2023. No, that's this year I've lost time. 2024, January 1st, 2024. All the books from 1928 will be public domain. So an enterprising narrator might look at that and go, Hmm, and find a book published in 1928 that they really like. And you've got eight months and three days or two days. See, I told you, I'm losing track of time before January 1st that you could record it, get it edited, and then you're ready to publish it. The second it goes into public domain on January 1st.

**[00:14:56] Sarah**

That's brilliant. I bow. Bow down.

**[00:15:01] Karen Commins**

And. And I'll just say, where. Where might one find a list of good books from 1928? Goodreads has a list of most popular books by the year. And this is really good because you can see what books people today still find interesting from that time period. So, you know, like I forget, what was the number one book this year? It might have been Mrs. Dalloway from Virginia Woolf. I can't remember. And I don't have it on my screen. But whatever the books are that people still find good from that time period will be listed. And so you can just scroll down that list from 1928 on Goodreads and go, Huh? So like this year, all of the Sherlock Holmes books finally hit the public domain. Most of them had been, but there were a few that hadn't. The Hardy Boys, I think it's the first three books this year became Public Domain, so you might see some goodies like that next year that, oh, January 1st, this is going to be public domain. And then you could just go ahead and record it now and be ready to go. Obviously I get wound up on this and get excited and this is glad y'all are wanting to talk about these kinds of things.

**[00:16:22] Sarah**

I really appreciate that. That's just I was joking with my husband because he always will ask a random question and he'll be like, Well, Sara and answer it and I'll. And I was telling him about this and I was like, like, why sloths don't leave trees? And he was like, Well, actually know that. And I was like, Come on. So I think you're, you know, you're going on the list of people that just say, you know, something, too. And you're like, Well, actually.

**[00:16:50] Karen Commins**

Well, when I worked a thrival job with everybody's favorite government agency, I was in IT. And I was kind of the expert there. I'd been at it a while and other people would come to me with their questions, trying to get help, you know, other systems, administrators. And I'd ask them what they'd done and we'd try to figure out from there. But they'd come to me and I told them then, and I still like to tell people, Well, if I don't know the answer, I'll be more than happy to make up something. And your husband may be doing that too, so who knows?

**[00:17:30] Sarah**

Don't tell me that.

**[00:17:36] Karen Commins**

But what I just said about public domain, I'm not making up. And I try not to make up stuff because then you lose all credibility. People don't really trust you anymore. So. Uh, I would say don't make up stuff now. Maybe extrapolate and come up with. The ideal solution kind of thing. Maybe that goes across better.

**[00:18:03] Sarah**

I think you came across fine, but I think agreed.

**[00:18:08] Amy Johnson**

And it actually was published in 1937, and then it had another edition in 2001.

**[00:18:15] Karen Commins**

Okay. Well, now this is another story. Glad you brought that up. That 2001 edition. Does not. Carry the copyright from the 1937 edition. So it's possible. And without knowing the name, I don't know. We'd have to do a little research. But it's possible that that 1937 edition. Didn't have their copyright renewed and is in fact in the public domain and the 2001 edition. The copyrighted material in it is only what's new for that edition.

**[00:18:56] Amy Johnson**

I think that's true about what's new is only because I think it was only the introduction that was new.

**[00:19:03] Karen Commins**

Well, so we might need to do a little more research because if that 1937 edition did not have its copyright renewed, you can record it today. Oh, and you don't need UNICEF involved. You don't need the estate involved, and they won't get a dime of your audiobook.

**[00:19:21] Amy Johnson**

Even if it was 1937.

**[00:19:24] Karen Commins**

If if, if if they did not renew their copyright.

**[00:19:28] Speaker5**

Mm hmm.

**[00:19:29] Karen Commins**

And one way you might check is so in the 2001 edition, if you look on the copyright page, it will usually say Copyright 1937 Copyright Renewed. 19 of so 37. So 28. So it'd be 1965. And if it doesn't say that, it probably wasn't. So it would say it would say like. Copyright 1937 Copyright Renewed 1965. New Material. Copyright 2001.

**[00:20:02] Speaker3**

Oh, okay.

**[00:20:04] Karen Commins**

But that 2001 copyright does not extend to the underlying work. It had to, that 1937 edition had to be renewed in order for the copyright to still be valid. You've really got me curious now because I'm like, What is this book? And you're going to have to send me an email with the name because I just got a no. Now, Will would love it if you if we found out that like, no, you could just go right ahead today.

**[00:20:38] Speaker3**

I will actually do that.

**[00:20:42] Karen Commins**

Because that, that is such a boon because you can do whatever you want to the edition that's in the public domain. And if we could find out that the 37 edition is you're good to go.

**[00:20:56] Amy Johnson**

Okay. Well, it's complicated. So we'll we'll see. Okay.

**[00:21:00] Karen Commins**

Getting more so more and more intriguing with everything you say about it.

**[00:21:05] Speaker3**

Okay.

**[00:21:07] Sarah**

Yeah, absolutely. Want to know what happens? Don't need to know the name of the book, but want to know what happened.

**[00:21:12] Karen Commins**

Yeah, we're all. We're all like. And then what happened?

**[00:21:16] Sarah**

It's better than a soap opera.

**[00:21:20] Speaker3**

We'll see.

**[00:21:21] Karen Commins**

Yeah. This is. This is a compelling mystery you've got going now.

**[00:21:26] Speaker3**

Yeah. It'll be a hard book to. I'll email it to you.

**[00:21:29] Karen Commins**

Well, I can't wait. And. And I want you to know you can trust me. I'm not going to try to steal the book out from under you. I'm just curious and want to help you get further along in your quest. But I would counsel don't tell people in general because they will still steal it out from you if it's a good idea and they think they can make money. And just as an aside, there's you know, there's so many choices in audiobook distributors and that's a whole other conversation. But a lot of people like to go with spoken realms and spoken realms has a project tracker where you enter your project and everybody can see what your project is. And so I know of instances where there's like, there was no interest in a book, and it seemed like somebody saw that. Or they got wind of it somehow, but that seems to me the likely place. And then they jumped and did it before the original person could get it published. So I would just say if anybody was going to use spoken realms or any other site like that where you have to enter your project, I wouldn't enter it until I'm ready to publish it. I wouldn't enter it at the moment that I think I'm going to do it. I would go ahead and do it, record it, get it edited, be ready to release it, and then I'd enter it and be ready to go because you just don't want other people to scoop you. And take advantage of your ideas. And, you know, because a lot of times whoever gets there first gets the most money.

**[00:23:03] Amy Johnson**

I appreciate that. Yeah, that's a good that's a good advice.

**[00:23:10] Karen Commins**

Well and c w Warner rights has hand raised. So I'm going to pass the mic to you. And Tamara, you now can talk at Will.

**[00:23:26] Tamara**

Hello. I just had one quick question about what you were just talking about. Okay. Just because this is this particular topic is always one that I am confused on. And you mentioned as, for an example, one book by Virginia Woolf. And when you were as I was listening, you were saying that if the original had not had its copyright extended, that you could record or publish the audiobook for the original. But what if it's if an updated version has already been done and there's an audiobook for it already published?

**[00:24:11] Karen Commins**

That's a great question. The great and wonderful. One of the many blessings and joys of a public domain book is anybody can record it and it doesn't matter if there's already an edition. So like, for instance, say your favorite book is The Wizard of Oz. And I looked on Audible. There are over 90 editions of The Wizard of Oz. Now, some of them are just that single story. Some of them have that story combined with other Oz stories or maybe even in another book entirely. People have done it as a podcast. And because it's public domain, that means its copyright has expired and it belongs to all of us. So anyone can do anything they want to with it. And if it was a book I wanted to do and somebody had already done it. I would still want to do it because my interpretation is going to be different from anybody's. And I'm still creating art and putting something out to the world. I'm still building my portfolio. I'm gaining experience with everything I do. So I wouldn't let that stop me if it was something I really wanted to do. But I mean, you got to be clear that it is in public domain. So like the Virginia Virginia Woolf book that I mentioned today. Became public domain on January 1st. And I'm sure there are probably already 5 or 10 of them now because people were waiting for it to be public domain so they could publish their own copy. Does that make sense?

**[00:25:41] Tamara**

That does make sense. And I guess the when you mentioned that book, I went to look at that book and I saw that there was already an audio book released for it. And there was also a new edition put out in publication of the of a paperback on Amazon on in 2021. So that's what gave me the questions like, well, you know what what what do you do then? So since you're saying if it's in public domain, um, you wouldn't let that deter you if there were other people that already put out their version of the audio book?

**[00:26:16] Karen Commins**

That's right. I would if it was something I really wanted to do, I'd do it.

**[00:26:21] Speaker7**

Okay.

**[00:26:22] Karen Commins**

Okay. Now if was just kind of lukewarm about it and they're already a bunch of other additions, I'd probably this is me. I would look for another one where I could be the only or one of a few.

**[00:26:36] Tamara**

More of a standout.

**[00:26:37] Karen Commins**

Yeah, exactly.

**[00:26:39] Speaker7**

Okay.

**[00:26:40] Karen Commins**

And there's so many that are public domain that were published between 1928 and 1963 because they didn't renew their copyright. I saw there are studies that say about 74% and this is we're talking millions and millions of books that are public domain. But you have to do the research to find that out.



**[00:27:01] Speaker7**

Okay.

**[00:27:03] Tamara**

Do you have a place? Do you have a site that we could go to if we, you know, for the tools and for the resources to to try to as we are moving through this type of progress and and doing the research, we can get information that maybe we don't have on our own.

**[00:27:21] Karen Commins**

That is, you know, Tamara, people are going to think you're an audience shill for me because that's a perfect question. Why? Yes. Yes, I do. All right. If you. The easiest thing I can tell you is to go to [Bit.ly/ComminsPDHQ](https://bit.ly/ComminsPDHQ) And those four letters all have to be caps as well.

**[00:27:56] Tamara**

Could you repeat that?

**[00:27:58] Karen Commins**

I can. [Bit.ly/ComminsPDHQ](https://bit.ly/ComminsPDHQ) called, funnily enough, public domain narration headquarters. And so I've linked to all my resources there. That's for public domain books. That's really my spoke of everything I've got because there's some of it's on my site, [KarenCommins.com](https://KarenCommins.com) and some of it is available to members of my site [NarratorsRoadmap.com](https://NarratorsRoadmap.com). But there's a there's a lot of info on [KarenCommins.com](https://KarenCommins.com) that's free, but it's all linked in that one article.

**[00:28:58] Tamara**

Okay. Thank you very much. I really appreciate it. Well, I appreciate.

**[00:29:02] Karen Commins**

You coming and having such great questions. Yeah, I.

**[00:29:05] Tamara**

Wanted to I really, you know, listening to that and I've been in discussions before that I always left, um, still feeling a little bit confused on the matter of, you know, when is public domain and how long you have and, and you cleared up a lot of information for me. So I really appreciate it. Thank you so much. And I'm going to. Well thank you. Back in my car. Thank you so much. Thank you.

**[00:29:29] Karen Commins**

I just realized I could I actually have the power here. I could drop a link to this in the chat, couldn't I? Y yes. Yes, I could.

**[00:29:42] Tamara**

Thank you again. Let me just.

**[00:29:44] Karen Commins**

Thank you so much. I appreciate it. So I've just put the link to what I was just talking about that takes you to my. Um, my public domain narration headquarters were all my resources are linked. And so one of the is a article of. Links to help you find rightsholders to the books. And that one has the ones that have the databases where you look up whether the copyrights have been renewed or not. And then there's a lot of other associated stuff here that will be useful as you're looking into public domain books and actually recording, producing and publishing one. Oh, so let's see. I found out I was just reading the chat that Steve found out. That is now refusing new versions when there are too many. Well, that is really interesting, Steve. You want to. It would. I would love it if you want to come to the microphone and talk. Excuse me. Talk about it more. Can I convince you to do that? I don't see you raising your hand, Steve. But I'd love to talk to you about that because, um. Oh, yeah. Created the book. Oh, wow. Huh? That is really interesting. But you can you don't have to go through. You can you've got the book. You could publish it through somebody else. Or you could combine that story with other Edgar Allan Poe stories or other horror stories that then becomes something new. You know, Kyrie says *The Raven* is not a full length novel, but. Maybe you could. It seems to me you could combine both of those things. But that does. Stink. And I wonder if, you know, if a different person would tell you a different story, because we often see that happening. So am. Passing the mic to you. There you are. You just have to unmute yourself.

**[00:32:15] Steve**

Hi, Karen. Thanks for bringing. Hey, can you hear me okay? Yeah. That's good to hear from you. Yeah. Thank you. Um, yeah. So I think I put most of my story in the chat there. I just following your wonderful roadmap. Thank you. The information about, you know, that you had written in your article about public domain books. And so I followed that and I created my book and claimed it, you know, on my author profile on or went I tried to claim it. And that's when they said, Nope, sorry. Too many of them are already exist because my original thinking was I was going to do several of Poe's stories separately and then combine them into an anthology. Yeah, Um, and I still just, just do that and skip the individual part. But I got busy with other books and so I, I haven't been able to circle back to that. But, um, yeah, I'm interested in listening to the rest of this conversation and thank you for reminding me we don't just have to go through. So thank you.

**[00:33:21] Karen Commins**

Well, did I'm curious, was this an automated message that you got when you tried to claim it or did you have an actual interaction with somebody there?

**[00:33:31] Steve**

Uh, yeah, no, it was an email. So when when you go to to claim it and it looks like it's in processing, then you have to wait and they email you and say, you know, either, okay, yeah, it's, it's accepted or not. And in this case it wasn't. And they gave me that reason why. So that's what happened.

**[00:33:48] Karen Commins**

See, I've never heard of that. And I mean I don't doubt you and it wouldn't surprise me if they've changed their rules about this. But it did say that, you know, I'm saying I'm going to have to change what I say because.

**[00:34:02] Steve**

Yeah, they said that it is true.

**[00:34:04] Karen Commins**

Well, what I say is still true. You can still record it, right? You just need a different distributor.

**[00:34:10] Steve**

Right? Yeah. And that's probably what I'll do. Or maybe try the anthology route. We'll see. But, but no, it did say in the email that this was something recent, that they were, uh, it was, it was a new policy because they were getting too many people doing the same, um, very popular books. So they wanted to cut down on that. So there you go.

**[00:34:32] Karen Commins**

Yeah, you could. You could do an anthology. And I wonder if there's not a biography of him in the public domain. Like if you did a biography and then his most famous story kind of thing in one book. I mean, there's different ways to go. How long is that? The the story of that. Do you remember?

**[00:34:55] Steve**

Girl. Oh, the Raven. I think I had it at like 15 pages. It's very short, but other people have had their versions out. So I thought, well, if they could do theirs, maybe I could do mine. But they had done theirs. I think the most recent one I saw was a couple of years before. So this this must be a recent update.

**[00:35:14] Karen Commins**

Yeah. And it could be. I mean, because it's more of a short story and or a novella. It's I'm not sure how long it is, but it it's not that sweet spot of like 6 to 8 hours that they would rather sell. That's really interesting, though.

**[00:35:37] Steve**

Well, my journey into public domain shall continue, and I will continue to listen to all the wonderful things that that you, the queen of public domain, have to say about it. So thank you.

**[00:35:49] Karen Commins**

Well, thanks for stopping by and sharing that tidbit because that's interesting and interesting turn of events and not one that we really like very much, is it?

**[00:36:00] Steve**

Salovey.

**[00:36:03] Karen Commins**

I see a. Little conversation about the APAC pre mixer in the chat and about how loud it was. They are always very loud and then people are hoarse the next day and they can't actually work. But. It's one day a year and I know everybody has a good time when they when they go to those. So who else would like to have? Join in the conversation. It's a picnic. So bring your own topic, whatever you want to talk about. If you've got news, if you've got like this, where you're stuck with something or you have ideas about something or. You just want to get something off your chest. We're here for it all. And I feel like I've been talking all morning, so I'm really eager to hear other people talk. I don't see you clamoring to rush forward, raising your hands and feel like I can't see you. I can't grab you. If I could just grab your your hands, say, come to the mic with me. And. And. I hope I see Sarah and says what an inappropriate comment to obviously this is something else going on. Hopefully not what I said. If it is, I'll apologize. Oh, I see. Nathan has got his hand raised, so I will send you the microphone. And Steve, if you'll mute, because there's music in the background. Thank you.

**[00:37:40] Speaker9**

And I was enjoying hearing like, you know, vicariously living the New York through Steve right now.

**[00:37:47] Karen Commins**

Where are you? And I guess you didn't go to New York.

**[00:37:50] Speaker9**

No, I'm in Montreal, so I'm not that far away. But like, I think it's about six hours away from me, something like that.

**[00:37:57] Karen Commins**

But. But yet you didn't go.



**[00:37:59] Speaker9**

Yeah, it's still kind of expensive. You know, like, there's the border crossing and the fact that your currency is double mine and all those things.

**[00:38:08] Karen Commins**

Well, I get that. And and I didn't go. I'm in Atlanta and I didn't go. And because, like you say, it's expensive and I'm even used to the currency. But yeah.

**[00:38:17] Speaker9**

Well, that's the thing because like.

**[00:38:19] Karen Commins**

You know, they charge more. Yeah, Yeah. I mean, everything everything costs more in New York than it does in Atlanta.

**[00:38:26] Speaker9**

So. Yeah, so like if a hotel room is like 200 American for me, that's like 400 bucks, you know? So like, that's a, that's a big one for me. So I've got a, I got a plan for that kind of thing if I want to go. I'm trying next year. I want to go next year.

**[00:38:40] Karen Commins**

Next year. I think they're planning for it to be virtual again.

**[00:38:44] Speaker7**

Yeah. So.

**[00:38:45] Karen Commins**

So you just have to sign up for the thing and then it's all over. They had a platform called re attendance. And you would it was kind of like little Zoom breakout rooms. But, you know, it's all online. And so I think that's the latest plan.

**[00:39:02] Speaker9**

Oh, yeah. So like, it wouldn't be in person at all or like just entirely virtual.

**[00:39:07] Karen Commins**

Entirely. Yeah. Last year, the last couple of years, it was entirely virtual. And then they made the announcement that they would alternate years. So this year was in person and then next year would be virtual again, which thrills me no end because for virtually all of all of the joy and none of the stress and expense.

**[00:39:29] Speaker9**

Yeah, for sure. I was gonna actually ask. I'm going to be putting together some new samples and was wondering if anybody had any input on like where they go to get them. Like what kind of samples are the best in terms of like me personally, I'm a I like to do sci fi and fantasy and like thrillers. That's kind of what I go after. So that's what I'd be looking for. But I was wondering if, like any of you guys who have, you know, a ton of books under your belt and like work with publishers regularly, like if you have any tips on like, what things publishers would be looking for if I'm to submit a sample.

**[00:40:05] Karen Commins**

Well, I do know they're looking for things that are shorter now. And I actually got to work with Hillary Huber on my demos. And I know she did a session at VEO Atlanta and they are selling the replay of VEO Atlanta. If anybody missed it. But she did a session on creating a killer demo. And if anybody knows about a killer demo, it's Queen Hillary. And so I haven't seen the replay yet, but I'm excited to see what she would have to say. But when she I mean, she actually edited my scripts. I found pieces that I wanted to work on and she cut the scripts so that they were very short and targeted and they displayed something like, if you have an accent and it needs to be like right up front, you need to have male female dialog. You need to. Have. Narrative part because they need to know how you'll tell the rest of the story other than just dialog. And. She cut things out of the script that I really liked. But to keep it short, I think they're all like a minute or something that she said, You just got to have it cut because we're not here to tell them the whole story. We're here to get them interested in hearing the whole story. So that was something that I really liked hearing from her.

**[00:41:34] Speaker9**

So almost like a trailer. Edit Like like a trailer edit of the book almost kind of thing. Like, is that what you're talking about? Well, of the scene.

**[00:41:41] Karen Commins**

I mean, because, you know, you'd pick out a scene that displays something that you want to show off, whether it's. Uh, you definitely need a male female dialog. You definitely need narrative first person, third person, you know, And then to have these things labeled as to what they are. And I know Pat Fraley had posted something. About samples. And I might be able to find it if I see Sarah's got her. I've got several people with hands raised, so I'm going to send you all the mic and maybe you want to talk about this topic or maybe not, but when to talk, I'm going to look for that reference. I just so I've also given the mic to Rich and Sarah and. And Chris, I.

**[00:42:33] Sarah**

Just wanted to tell you, you didn't say anything inappropriate. I did. Okay. At at. I said something inappropriate to somebody because I was you know, I was a quarter of a champagne in and just escaped the loud room of terror and and now think she's offering me a job. So, you know, you just have to say embarrassing things to people. And, you know, apparently she didn't.

**[00:42:58] Karen Commins**

Think it was inappropriate.

**[00:42:59] Sarah**

So she laughed. She laughed real hard and wanted to make a doo wop song about it. So.

**[00:43:04] Karen Commins**

That sounds really good. That sounds.

**[00:43:07] Sarah**

Okay. Yeah, but anyway, I just wanted to assure you that you didn't do anything untoward. You're welcome. Tonight.

**[00:43:17] Speaker3**

I will sleep.

**[00:43:18] Karen Commins**

Better tonight with that knowledge. Wonderful. Rich or crisp? One of you. Go ahead.

**[00:43:28] Speaker3**

We were working on. Go ahead, Chris. Go ahead.

**[00:43:31] Speaker10**

All right. All right. So I'm at the airport, so hopefully you don't have any trouble hearing me.

**[00:43:38] Karen Commins**

No, You sound great.

**[00:43:39] Speaker10**

All right, good. Yeah. So just trying to help answer or give some clarification to Nathan's question about samples. You know, so there's different there's different opinions and it's going to vary based on different producers that you talk to or your choices for your samples may differ based on the platform. Uh, you know, versus just uploading samples to your, to your personal website. Because if you're uploading samples to a platform that may only accept two samples of a, say, one minute length or a two minute length, you know, then you're then you're limited, you're limited to the, the genres that, that you can represent. And in that case, you want to pick you want to pick the genre that you most want to work in. And like Karen mentioned, select a sample that is going to represent what you can do in that genre. So front load it, front, load it with, if you like, sci fi front, load it with something very specific, maybe an action scene or just something that really represents that genre with dialog. And if you can mix it up with male female dialog, that's great. If there's alien voices or alien names, try to throw that in there. Um, some, some producers actually like to listen to longer demos. Some some want to hear. If if you specialize in accents or a certain accent, they they may want to hear that you can sustain an accent for several minutes rather rather than just one sentence. Um, so those are some things to think about. Um, you know, I, I, I don't, I don't know if anyone else on this call was in the Johnny Hellas Splendiferous Workshop.

**[00:46:02] Speaker10**

Um, Sean Pratt was there and Hillary Huber was there and everyone was there. And they gave their they each gave their opinions about this very topic. Um, you know, some, some like to see not more than, say, six samples on your website. Um. And others say, no, do do more. If you do so many different genres and you want to give, give potential listeners or producers an opportunity to to listen to all of it. Leave that up to them as to what they want to listen to. So just to kind of shorten this a little bit with regards to length, it's not going to hurt you if you have a sample that's 3 minutes or 4 minutes. If a producer only wants to listen to the first 15 seconds or 30 seconds or one minute, then they can stop at that point. But you have more to give them if they want to continue to listen. So it's not going to hurt in this case unless the platform limits you to a certain amount of time. So just just keep that in mind. I mean, I'm I'm saying all this now and I've got to go back and and revise my samples. I'm constantly trying to revise samples on my website or on different platforms. But it can be a time consuming effort, especially if you're listed on multiple platforms or publisher sites and you want to keep things fresh. And if you're working consistently, you can get. Time, time consuming to go back and try to change those things. But it's a it's a never ending cycle of improvement. So I hope that answers your question somewhat.

**[00:48:00] Karen Commins**

Nathan And you made some really great points.

**[00:48:04] Speaker7**

Go ahead.

**[00:48:05] Speaker9**

Oh, I was just I was just going to say, it definitely helps.

**[00:48:09] Karen Commins**

And a lot of people are making other comments in the chat about this, about some of the things they've been hearing in recent days and to go along with what you were saying. Chris, I've just found the thing that Pat Fraley had written on Facebook actually in 2019, but he was saying that producers don't want they no longer want the demo that had multiple samples in it. So I think they're all consistently saying we need a targeted demo of a particular thing and label it so that it's they know what you're trying to showcase. Like, yes, you know, female French accent kind of thing, but, you know, don't have this, you know, back in the day we used to have samples would be, you know, five minutes and it would have 2 or 3 different excerpts in it. And we don't want to do that anymore because they don't have time. They don't have, you know, time to wade through it to to hear stuff.

**[00:49:10] Speaker10**

Exactly. Exactly. I agree with with everything you just said. And I was just going to add like like you mentioned, Karen, how Hillary took your sample and and eliminated parts that maybe made the sample drag on. Um, you know, if you're if you're creating your own samples and you want to pull from a book you've already had published or material you've already recorded, that's that's great. Like if you already have in mind a scene that you recorded previously and you said, Man, I really want to have that as a sample. That's good. You can go back through and you can rerecord that if you want, like, like maybe it was a book that you enjoyed, but you. You have progressed since then and you know you can do it better. Don't be afraid to go back and rerecord it. And you can always also record new material for yourself. You can even make up a script for yourself if if you think you can create some really flashy scene with dialog and action. You can write it yourself. There's nothing that says you have to pick from some already published material or written written material so you can get creative in that way.

**[00:50:49] Karen Commins**

Oh, those are great points. Thank you for sharing all that. In fact, as you said that I was thinking that it's it's good as you're recording a book when you do an especially satisfying scene or something that showcases that, you'd like to do more of this kind of work. Make a note or save a sample right then. So you don't have to go hunting for these things and. I think an flajnik who's who's not with us this afternoon. Normally she is, but she'll collect samples like every time she goes along in a book, there's be something that's good or and she'll just keep taking little excerpts from books as she goes. So then she's always ready. And I love this because, like, if a producer wants to hear her French accent, she's got something recent. She can just say, Oh, here, here you go. And it's important to know that more authors are being involved in the decision. And so they are again needing more concise, targeted samples that illustrate a particular thing or demonstrate its audio. It can't illustrate, but to demonstrate a particular skill and then to have it named that way so people know what it is they're going to be listening for. So these are wonderful points. I'm so glad you shared all that.

**[00:52:17] Speaker9**

I'm just curious. You think the best thing to do then possibly would be like on our website, for example, you could have like accent category and then you could have like, you know, all these different categories. So a casting director can just go click and immediately be brought there, find the accent they're looking for like and then that sample has a bit of narration, but also mostly that accent present. And then like you could do the same thing for male female dialog, like all those kinds of different stuff, like, like that is probably the most helpful for them now at this point.

**[00:52:48] Speaker11**

I'm going to jump in and say yes. Nathan, based on what I've heard this past weekend, because your site is your control, your site can offer a very easy categorical reference for someone that wants to know more about what you can do. But I'm going to echo Chris on a lot of things. And I also want to reinforce what we learned in Atlanta from both Hillary and from Scott Brick and and Sean Pratt is that and I think Kaylee said this earlier, it blows. It blows her mind because we can edit the text to make it say what we need it to say to reinforce those two character dialogs or that that particular phrase of thought, you can clean that stuff out. And when you do that, that gives you an opportunity to put maybe a few more options on your website for the samples that you'd like to offer. But they're more concise and more appropriate. Now I'm going to go one step further because Audrey said, don't forget that there are people like authors, there are people like publishers who like what they hear and they want to go a bit deeper. So don't shortchange yourself by putting everything on your site at a small snippet. Give a couple of longer examples so they can explore you just a little bit more. Again, all things I learned this past weekend and you know, just eye openers that that I'm hearing reinforced with this conversation.

**[00:54:16] Karen Commins**

And you're right, it was Caylee Kirby who added that in the chat about Hillary's comment of editing the copy, because, as Kaylee noted, it's a game changer and we can make it say what we need it to say. So I appreciate both of y'all bringing that to the picnic so we all get to benefit when people go out and about to these conferences.

**[00:54:39] Speaker9**

Yeah. Thank you a lot. By the way, for those of you who were at the conference and have shared that info because that's really benefit for us and I'm super appreciative.

**[00:54:50] Karen Commins**

And if you can get the replay, I'm sure, like I say, that Hillary's presentation, well, it's the replay of all of you. Atlanta. There's so much there that would be beneficial. But that would go further in depth into it in some of the others would as well. We're coming up on 3:00. And so I wonder if anybody else has any comments or topics they want to bring up. Or we all just munching on our fried chicken and enjoying the afternoon in the sun. We can pretend.

**[00:55:29] Speaker9**

More like eating stir fry and sitting at my computer.

**[00:55:33] Karen Commins**

Well, I guess that counts. We'll let you have that at our little afternoon picnic. Yeah, this is really worked out well and I'm just appreciate so many of you stopping by and sharing your experiences and. Oh, Kaylee says she wasn't there, but she learned from Hillary before. But it still works. It's still a good comment and great source. And like I said, if Hillary is telling you, you know, it's the truth. But I just do appreciate everybody stopping by this afternoon and this really wonderful discussion that we've had. It has been so delightful to hear from so many of you and different topics. And Amy, I'm expecting an email about that book. I may not be able to sleep tonight unless I find out about that book.

**[00:56:28] Speaker3**

Will do.

**[00:56:30] Speaker7**

Yeah, that was cool.

**[00:56:31] Speaker9**

Unicef had the rights for it. That's random and cool.

**[00:56:35] Karen Commins**

It is. It's. I've never, never heard of that, but. Anyway, I am going to start packing up my picnic basket and blanket. But you're all welcome to hang around on clubhouse and there are plenty of other rooms. I don't know what's happening at the moment, but clubhouse has been such a joy to be a part of and so many good conversations happening all the time. But I do want to thank you all because it is time to get the show back on the road. So I'm going to conclude Pit Stop at the moment. The recording is going to be available on clubhouse later today and I'll post it on NarratorsRoadmap pretty soon, but I do hope you'll take another road trip with me in two weeks on April 12th. Gosh, we're already entering April, but that day we're going to talk to Allison Larkin, who in addition to being a fantastic, award winning narrator, is also a playwright. So I feel sure that her story is going to inspire you to new things. And in the meantime, I hope you find joy in every journey and are living the life of your dreams. Thanks so much for stopping by this afternoon and having this really delightful conversation today, and I just appreciate it all. I hope you have a wonderful afternoon and a wonderful week, and we'll see you soon here on Pit Stop.

END OF TRANSCRIPT



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