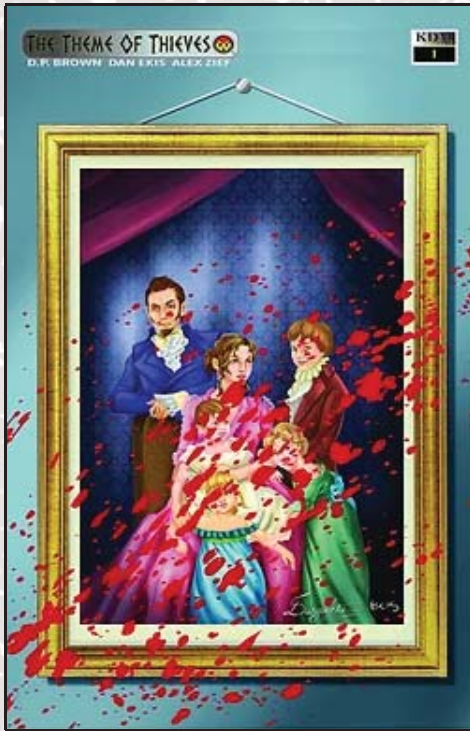




Scribble House

unconventional adventures in publication

Panelist bios and take-home insights



D.P. Brown is the writer and creator of the comic book series *The Theme Of Thieves*. The logline of the series: When a time traveler uses his mysterious powers to yank two teens through time, they must overcome their cynicism while coming of age so that they can work together to unravel the cause behind disappearing people in the present day as world tensions escalate. Think *Lost* meets *The Wire* meets *Quantum Leap*. The series aims to tackle sci-fi with a variety of different takes on subjects in politics, race relations, conspiracies and the youth experience in an unforgiving world.

D. P. Brown, born and raised in Cleveland, OH, is a die hard, long suffering Cleveland Browns fan. He has worked with Nerdcyclopedia with Scott Hitchens in writing articles, developing podcasts and YouTube videos. He now co-hosts a pop culture show on the [Nerdcyclopedia](#) channel on YouTube. The first two books of the series were drawn by Dan Ekis of Odyssey, Inc. fame with the third being drawn by Marvel Comics artist Ruben Gonzalez (*Infinity Heist*). D.P. Brown has been a life long connoisseur of pop and geek culture and is heavily influenced by works from Alan Moore, Damon Lindelof and Frank Miller. With this graphic novel, he hopes to educate readers on

the different perspectives of peoples' lives as well as historical events in a fun and innovative type way. He's now affiliated with the [Comicsburgh](#) collective of local Pittsburgh creators to share resources and get the word out about comic creators putting out their work in the Western PA region.

What tool, website, or other resource should people know about if they want to publish a project like yours?

Since I publish in more of a comic book format I use [Wix](#) website blog posts to put up panel-by-panel sequential stories to convey my work. To raise funding to support my site and pay for artwork, coloring, lettering and printing I crowdfund through [Kickstarter](#), which has been tremendous in me realizing that I can achieve my goals without going straight to a publisher. Crowdfunding allows me to cite proof of concept for my work and gauge audience interest in what I'm trying to convey.

What is your #1 advice for someone who wants to do a similar project?

Complete the first part or arc of your story first. Don't keep waiting until it's perfect before it's put out. As artists, while we always strive for perfection in the back of our minds, we know what we put out isn't perfect. But it has to come out sometime. The whole story doesn't need to be complete, just 50-75% percent of it. This way, when you go to Kickstarter you can tell your potential backers how much you already have in the can and what you are securing funding for that will take you the rest of the way.

What has been the biggest challenge you encountered, and how did you get past it?

My first Kickstarter I was at a loss on who would really back this. Sure I had family and friends, but that wasn't going to be enough to get me what I needed as far as funding. To get past this hurdle I researched the best way to run a Kickstarter and ran into a podcast by Tyler James called [ComixLaunch](#). It's a weekly podcast that gives you insight into crowdfunding and he has guests on each week talk about their crowdfunding success stories. After about a year of listening to his podcasts I bit the bullet and invested in his Comixlaunch Pro master Class and it took me step by step through the process of running a successful Kickstarter campaign. This course was an inspiration and got me past my hurdle to where I have now run four successful Kickstarter campaigns.

What is one mistake or misstep you made? What did you learn from making it?

One misstep I've made is thinking I can do this all by myself. I can't. Having a support system is crucial. Even if they may not always understand exactly what you're doing, if your support system sees your passion, and especially sees your consistency, they will support you no matter what. That means always being on time and keeping your promises when you make them. You can show humility but talk your material up as if you know it's great. Speak everything into existence and it will happen. As creators we sometimes like to avoid people. If your intentions are to get your work out there to sell you have to network with people and also be willing to support other people's projects. I learned what goes around comes around. It may not be at the time you want it but people are always watching you and if they see honesty and consistency in you they will support you.



Sarah Shotland is a literary artist, educator, and citizen. She is the author of the novel *Junkette*, and a playwright whose work has been performed in professional theaters around the world. She's the co-founder and program director of [Words Without Walls](#), which brings creative writing classes to jails, prisons, and drug treatment centers.

Sarah's most recent work, *Abolition is Everything*, was published by Antenna Press. She's currently working on a collection of essays about teaching creative writing in jails and prisons. Her essays about the subject have appeared in *The Iowa Review*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *Baltimore Review*, *Lunch Ticket*, and *Proximity*. With Sheryl St. Germain, she coedited the literary anthology *Words Without Walls: Writers on Addiction, Violence & Incarceration*, published by Trinity University Press in spring of 2015.

What is your #1 advice for someone who wants to do a similar project?

My advice for anyone who's interested in working with stigmatized writers is to build in time to have a lot of conversation and deliberation for the writers themselves to: 1) consider lots of publication options & 2) consider all the risks involved in publishing. I would also plan to spend about twice as much time as you'd initially think is necessary to deal with logistical issues that will inevitably arise!

What has been the biggest challenge you encountered? How did you get past it?

Because I work with writers who are in jail and prison, there are lots of issues that come up with prison administration. It's really important to have friendships with other people who have been doing the kind of publishing you're interested in for longer than you have. When challenges come up, you can ask them for advice and mentorship. They can help you strategize about solutions. No matter what you're trying to do: ask someone to be your mentor.

What is one mistake or misstep you made? What did you learn from making it?

I didn't take enough time to build a team of people to help with the project. Not having a consistent team meant my weaknesses were never balanced by someone else's strengths, and that when "life happened" to me, the projects necessarily had to pause. Don't go it alone.



The Dirty Poet posts poems on only the finest lamp posts in town.

He also Tweets them (@SuperDirtyPoet) and released *Emergency Room Wrestling* in 2011.

What is your #1 advice for someone who wants to do a similar project?

My advice is write what you want and call it poetry. My efforts are just as much philosophy as poetry. I process my experience and throw a lot of shit at the wall. I define my own success, which is an exhilarating way to approach art.

What has been the biggest challenge you encountered?

City workers have torn my poems down as I post them, readers have screamed in my face on the street, I've had threats of \$1,000 fines per poem. How did I get past it? I just kept doing what I do and I'm still doing it today, so I win.

Other unconventional publishing resources:

- Want to publish an ebook? Happy Self Publisher has an excellent (and recent) comparison of the 7 largest ebook distribution platforms: <https://happyselfpublisher.com/which-ebook-distribution-platform-is-best/>
- If you're thinking about self-publishing a physical book through print-on-demand (POD) services, Reedsy tested out 6 major services in this detailed write-up: <https://blog.reedsy.com/print-on-demand-books/>

Both Happy Self Publisher and Reedsy have bunches of other great advice, guides, and resources, so it's worth taking a look around their sites.

Scribble House also has a resources page (<https://scribblehousepgh.com/resources/>) that includes resources specific to the Pittsburgh area along with more general info. Some other PGH-area things you might find helpful if you're taking on a non-traditional publishing project:

- The Pittsburgh Zine Fair: <http://www.pghzinefair.com/>
- PGH Print Shop: <https://www.pghprintship.com/>
- The Tiny Bookstore: <https://tinybookspgh.com/authors/>