



Jay Sandlin



Who's in the Spotlight?

Writer's Block Workshop is proud to introduce author **Jay Sandlin** as our Indie Author Spotlight!



Jay is the creator of **The Novel Comics**, a series that begins with **Outbreak Mutiny**, a unique story in that it is an Alternate History. With Superheroes. That's right. In other words, this book is for awesome nerds and fantasy/historical fiction lovers. (Like you! And me!)

I asked Jay to share his exciting project with you. Read on...

Q. Tell us about your book, *Outbreak Mutiny* and the planned series.

Jay: The Novel Comics is a shared universe of heroes and villains in an alternate timeline. In that sense, I hope to become, “the Stan Lee of the 21st Century.” The series takes place in a world with people who gain superpowers, the Outbreak Babies, and their struggles against the ruling Empire, The Reich. I label my chapters as “issues” for a comics style feel and will continue that trend in the Volume series. I will also release The Novel Comics Anthologies series for stories following other characters outside of the volume series.

Here's the official book description:

December 31, 1929, was a Day That Lived in Infamy. A war between extraordinary beings with superpowers ended in DEFEAT for the United States and her Allies. Darkness fell on a Golden Age of heroes at the hands of the REICH.

Ten years later, all still mourn the anniversary of the day the Reich seized control during Operation TripleReich. Life is a struggle for the Remnant States occupying the middle of the Old US.

A virus in the Chicago Zone reignites the conflict between good and evil as the Outbreak Mutineers gather to stop the plague's deadly origins.

Join the Outbreak Babies: - Buccaneer, Clockwork, Atlas, and more- as they battle the Warlords of Reich. Their adventures stretch across the years and through the sewers, high-seas, and even a city park.

No Matter the Time or Place, their Choice is Clear: Die Free or Live in Chains.



Q. When did you first start writing?

Jay: My writing began under the playground equipment in the third grade. I was never picked for sports and had no interest in playing them. I read books and then tried my hand at writing them. I wrote horror stories in my spiral notebook while my teachers droned on about mitosis and tried my hand at comic strips during long division lessons. I left writing behind for years and never considered it professionally again until I began to work on my Masters in History. I recognized I could combine my two great loves: Superheroes and History. Thus, the Novel Comics was built around a colorful cast of heroes and villains and their insertion into historic events set in a vastly different timeline.

Q. Do you write fiction, non-fiction, poetry, freelance articles?

Jay: Yes, as a Masters student I write heavy levels of non-fiction and this year also hope to release a monograph of oral history on a veteran I had the pleasure of interviewing. In ten hours of footage, I learned about his great life as a WWII clerk, Manhattan Project worker in Los Alamos, and NASA employee for the decades of the Cold War. I hope his grassroots experience for the major events of the 20th century proves to be as thrilling a read as it was to listen to, and it will also serve as my Master's Thesis.

Q. What is your favorite thing about writing?

Jay: The cathartic release and escapism offered by writing is second to none. A blank word file contains infinite possibilities when I stare at the void of whiteness. It is waiting for me to create. I also have a love/hate relationship with the process. I am not a patient person by nature but had to learn to be as a writer. Every writer should learn that your stuff will always suck...at first. The first drafts are like crude blocks of stone in the hands of a sculptor. If the sculptor leaves only the inchoate form of his creation in the stone, it will never appear in a museum or be admired by on-lookers. It takes painstaking chipping away (editing) and constructive criticism from your peers to bring out the true potential.

(Great analogy- writing is art, and art takes practice. ~Lynn)

Q. What types of genres are your favorite to read?

Jay: I read all Sci-Fi/Fantasy and the Star Wars book series have been my constant companions since the 4th grade. I love Timothy Zahn, David Luceno, Drew Karpshyn, and Paul S. Kemp. Outside of the Galaxy Far, Far Away I love the Ex-Heroes series by Peter Clines, the Confessions of a D-List Supervillain by Jim Bernheimer and plenty more.

Overall, my favorite fantasy series of all time is the Dresden Files by Jim Butcher. I would love it if he were my friend and read my book. (Jim, find me on twitter, @JSandlinWriter.)

Q. Do you have hobbies or pastimes that you like to do besides writing? What are they?

Jay: Aside from being a Masters student and searching for the esoteric mysteries of the past, my hobbies are improv acting and being a father. I am a member of the Sticky Wickets Improv Troupe (www.facebook.com/ItsTheWickets) and we perform monthly in the Shoals, AL area.

Above all my "hobby" is being the best dad I can be to my son Joel Sandlin. I got back into writing and pursuing higher education after he was born because I realized I had to set an example: I had to show my son through practice that attainable dreams can and should be pursued with smart planning and timing. Everything I do is for him.

(Excellent advice- always pursue your dreams, and teach your children to do the same. ~Lynn)

Q. Do you have any struggles with writing? (such as editing, writer's block, social media, marketing?)

Jay: The struggle was finding the patience. I began writing my first drafts of this story and imagined I would finish in a week and then be ready to publish.

Wrong.

The biggest struggle was recognizing the steps in the process and accepting the time required to make each one perfect. I feel I did that. I wrote the book from my first idea in June of 2016 through the publication in April of 2017. The story changed entirely in that time as well as the plot, settings, and characters. And that was what created a story I was proud to publish!

Q. What advice would you give to someone starting out on the self-publishing journey?

Jay:

The pains of the journey are temporary, but print is forever.

Q. Do you have any special tips to keep your writing workflow organized?

Jay: Yes, I made liberal use of Google Doc files to write ideas as they came to me. I would often wake up in the night and start typing on my phone about a plan for the battle aboard the high-seas of the ConCroaktador with the Outbreak Mutineers against the pyromaniac frog shaped beasts- the pyrogs.

I'm lucky my wife is understanding about what kind of man she married, otherwise she may not have bought that excuse as to why I was on my phone so late in the night.

In addition to using the docs for brainstorming I also created bullet point outlines of the stories. My "issue" format made it easy to label the section and then put the broad points of what would happen underneath. These were only guidelines, not rules. I would often stray away from them in the creative process. But having the outline to follow kept me grounded and worked to my advantage.

And I am already making bullet points for my next release in the OUTBREAK MUTINY series!

Q. What projects are you currently working on?

Jay: I would like to release two more books in 2017. One is going to be a children's book called "Little Wolfie at RiverHill School." It was written for my son, Joel, when I was taking him to school and he said he was scared. I asked him why and his three-year-old brain came up with the excuse that the Big Bad Wolf was waiting in his classroom.

That gave me an idea, and I went back to my office and started writing about a new kid coming to school that was a wolf. I shared it with his principal and was thrilled to be invited to share the book to the school assembly for "Read Across America".

We also announced an art contest for the students to submit their work to the book as illustrators. The book will be released in the next couple of months as a fundraiser item for the school.

You can hear me read the book here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=21begGUd1LI

Q. Anything else you'd like to share?

Jay: The idea for this book came from the notion that, if superpowers existed, there would be dictators, despots, and rulers that would try to utilize them as resources in a war machine. The people who have the potential to become Outbreak Babies in my world- the Latents- all contain the potential within them to become superheroes with amazing abilities.

The truth of my book is that we are all Latents.

By that, I mean our inner-talents should be fostered and developed. We live in a world where our prime directive is to pay bills and provide amenities of comfort and status that we have convinced ourselves are important. While I certainly don't recommend living in a cardboard box, I believe the world would be a better place if all Latents searched for their powers and brought them to their fullest potential.

One of the taglines for the book is, "Die free, or live in chains." In the book, the Reich is a slave empire seeking to utilize the powers of the Outbreak Babies for their conquests. The heroes see enslavement by the Reich as a fate worse than death.

In some ways, it can be a fate worse than death to live in mediocrity and never recognize your true talents. That is why I urge readers to find what they do best, and become SUPERHEROES at their talent.

(The best kinds of books contain deep messages. It's especially great that you can make a superhero/comic style book do this, and potentially reach so many people with this message. ~Lynn)

Q. Where can we find you, Jay?

Amazon Author Page: [amazon.com/Jay-Sandlin/e/Bo71XWDHSB](https://www.amazon.com/Jay-Sandlin/e/Bo71XWDHSB)

GoodReads Profile: [goodreads.com/author/show/283040.Jay_Sandlin](https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/283040.Jay_Sandlin)

Website/Blog: TheNovelComics.com

Facebook: [facebook.com/JaySandlinWriter/](https://www.facebook.com/JaySandlinWriter/)

Twitter: twitter.com/JSandlinWriter

Other Link(s): JaySandlinWriter.com

I would like to thank Jay Sandlin for giving his time, sharing his creations and being a part of the Writer's Block Workshop Indie Author Spotlight. Please check into his work and support your fellow indie author by purchasing his book and sharing this Spotlight with your followers! ~Lynn





Want to be in the Spotlight?

To qualify, you must have a self-published book / e-book for sale with decent reviews and of an appropriate nature. The book can be fiction or non-fiction. Your book will appear here with links to your book or sales page for a period of four weeks.

This Spotlight for your book is FREE. I only ask that you share your Spotlight with a link to this blog page with your social communities, as I will do the same. In this way, we support each other as a writing family.

If you would like to be featured (FOR FREE) on this page, please contact me [here](#). I can't wait to share your books!

~Lynn