

Using Proven Scientific Methods to Get Published

by Larry Strattner

Rewriting all my poetry and fiction at least twelve times is my modus operandi, whether it needs it or not. I send my stories and poems to places I judge will be simpatico to my worldview. I try to follow the publisher or editor's guidelines however Draconian. I keep an excel spreadsheet of my activity to avoid being a pest, or worse, making the dreaded simultaneous submission.

I have about a ninety-two percent rejection rate for my work unless you count acceptances by Saponifier Magazine, Computer World, Kingpin Chess or Adventure Cyclist as creative writing. So let's leave it at ninety-two.

Sending stuff to every person on God's green earth with hope one of them will like it is the drill. But we all know it's a drill. It seems so pointless and wasteful.

Thinking this over a truism emerges. Copy sells; but so does art and, except in rare cases, art is both the big come-on and the hook. So I close my heretical eyes to words, start paying attention to visuals and before long I spot the trigger and get busy.

Stripping to the waist (you don't want to see this) I apply a variety of temporary tattoos to my forearms, neck and the portion of what I identify as chest, visible when my shirt is unbuttoned a few buttons. If you apply enough of these stupid tattoos like Sylvester the Cat, Scooby Doo, and GI Joe, close enough together, a small photo of you will look like you're a refugee from one of the TV shows with "Ink" in its title.

After my "ink" dries I don a white shirt I've worn a few times without washing, unbutton the first four buttons from the top, roll the sleeves up roughly, just above the elbows, then throw on a pair of black slacks with black suspenders. Rough up the hair a bit and I'm good to go. (Another hair strategy is to shave your head and

tattoo your scalp which makes a statement but is admittedly extreme.)

I then take my selfie stick into a public restroom and snap a few head-to-knee shots of me, dressed as above, with my elbow on a urinal. Voilà. I am an edgy, irreverent, dangerous, poet with unclear gender proclivity.

I make a small copy of this picture and it appears on the top left corner of all my submissions. The white shirt, tattoos, suspenders, black slacks and setting sends such a confusing and enticing message every editor of every publication will not be able to stop carefully reading and considering my submission. Anyone who tells you otherwise doesn't know anything about advertising, (or hasn't ever seen a Prada ad).

Of course, if you are a really crappy writer this will only work once and you won't get accepted anyway. The good news is, these days, outlets for the crazy stuff like I write come and go like Canadian geese on a golf course. If you've read this far your stuff is probably the same. Happy submitting!

