

## THE WILDEST 20 MONTHS OF MY LIFE—SO FAR

By Craig Lancaster

After I struck a deal with AmazonEncore last June to publish my new novel, “The Summer Son,” ([http://www.amazon.com/Summer-Son-Craig-Lancaster/dp/1935597248/ref=ntt\\_at\\_ep\\_dpi\\_2](http://www.amazon.com/Summer-Son-Craig-Lancaster/dp/1935597248/ref=ntt_at_ep_dpi_2)) I joked on my blog (<http://craiglancaster.wordpress.com>) that someday I would write a memoir of publishing called “Dude, WTF?”

At the beginning November 2008, I had a promising idea for a story and a long trail of barely started and never finished manuscripts that stretched nearly two decades behind me. By the end of June 2010, I’d written and placed two novels with publishers, had won some acclaim for my debut, “600 Hours of Edward,” ([http://www.amazon.com/600-Hours-Edward-Craig-Lancaster/dp/1606390139/ref=sr\\_1\\_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1256144119&sr=1-1](http://www.amazon.com/600-Hours-Edward-Craig-Lancaster/dp/1606390139/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&s=books&qid=1256144119&sr=1-1)) and in between had traveled a path familiar to many writers who are just starting out in this business during a time of remarkable upheaval.

“Edward” began life as a self-published novel that I relentlessly flogged around my home state of Montana. It was eventually picked up by a wonderful regional publisher, Riverbend Publishing, which gave it a whole new life, one that has included a designation as a 2009 Montana Honor Book and a 2010 High Plains Book Award winner. Even more satisfying is the response of readers who have gravitated to the main character, Edward Stanton, a middle-aged man with Asperger syndrome who tries to navigate an extraordinary 25-day stretch of his life.

While “Edward” was doing its thing, I spent the better part of nine months working on “The Summer Son,” a novel about a fractured relationship between a father and a son. It’s a story that goes into our deepest, darkest places, where we assign blame (perhaps mistakenly), internalize our injuries and inflict them on the people around us. It’s a tale of violence, of love, of hope, of reckoning. Where “Edward” was a breeze and a joy to write, “The Summer Son” made me sidle up to my own emotions and motivations, which can be a harrowing thing.

The success of “Edward” indirectly put me into contact with AmazonEncore (<http://www.amazon.com/encore>), and I was delighted that the folks there loved “The Summer Son” as much as I did. They’ve done wonderful work on this book, and I’m excited that it’s out there now.

Once I found my stride as a novelist, things started happening quickly. Occasionally, I’ve stopped to consider the journey and reflect on why it all clicked after so many aborted attempts. I’m not sure I can pinpoint a reason. I reached a point in my life where I had something to say, and I’ve been able to find the characters and settings through which to say it. I hope you’ll take a

chance on my work and see if it resonates with you. The words on the page (or the pixels on the screen) matter only if there's someone on the other end to receive them.