

Sample Book Review

From: [Undisclosed Client](#)
To: [Denise Rutledge](#)
Subject: Re: First overview
Date: Undisclosed Date



Denise,

Thanks again for your helpful comments. The story was split like you suggested and was just published this month. In case you were interested in reading it, you can find it under [REDACTED] on Amazon. I think you will like it! Let me know.

Regards,

Art

----- Original Message -----

From: [Denise Rutledge](#)
To: '[Undisclosed Client](#)'
Sent: Undisclosed Date
Subject: First overview

Hi, Art:

I have read most of your book. The following things come to the fore:

- You have a good writing style. You don't need any heavy editing in that regard.
- The book lacks structure. As one the most famous authors of our time, John Gresham said in an interview, "I have to start with an outline. The book just doesn't turn out if I don't have the outline worked out before I start." You need to decide what your goal is. Is this a memoir for your family or is this an expose of how government works/doesn't work? If you are writing an expose, then family history gets in the way of that goal. Focus on pivotal events in your childhood that are going to impact your choices as an auditor. If the link is weak, leave it out.
- Don't tell your readers that you are a badass. Show them through actions in the narrative. Include more conversation when it will prove the point. This adds action to the story.
- Only include information about your private life when it impacts the story significantly. I know that your daughter encouraged you to write your story, so you are naturally going to lean toward telling the story to her. This would be fine for a family memoir. It won't work for a book for readers outside the family. Your audience is the American public. Target the book to the things they would want to know. They aren't going to be as interested in who your grandparents were or what [REDACTED] was like back in the day, as they are going to be in what efforts have or haven't been made in managing their tax dollars. Pare out the stuff that doesn't contribute to the main theme of the book, "corruption in government."
- Keep the thread of your ambition running throughout the book. This is a good motif, because it makes you human and believable. You can show how you went from no ambitions at all, to a man with goals. I would suggest you do it along one timeline. If your ambitions have kept you silent when you wanted to speak up, be transparent about that, too. I think your aim should be to keep yourself approachable and real. Take your inspiration from the Bible. There are only two characters (other than Jesus) who don't have a single bad thing said about them, Joseph and Daniel. Everyone else isn't perfect. If you seem real, your portrayals of all the other characters will seem real as well. (I'm not saying that you haven't done this. I'm just reinforcing its importance.)
- The format of returning to some previous time at the beginning of most of the chapters is not effective. It leaves your readers confused. You can start at some point further into the story, but make sure your trips back into the past have an anchor. Every piece of information you share about yourself should be there for a reason. Flashbacks can be a tricky device. It is easier to tell the story from the beginning and move forward chronologically.

I know that a great deal of effort has gone into this book already. Take a deep breath. Muster the energy to look at everything from a new angle. I know there is nothing more difficult. I hate the feeling that I'm starting all over, especially when I felt like I had the job done already. But your book will be better and more marketable. There is potential here.

I would recommend that you divide your book into two entities. There is a lot of material that will be wonderful to preserve for your children and grandchildren. That one is *The Memoirs of [REDACTED]*. Then there is the second book, *[REDACTED] Memoirs: How One [REDACTED] Fought Corruption*. This book has sales potential.

Thank you for this opportunity to evaluate your manuscript. If you have any questions, please let me know. I would be glad to clarify anything that seems ambiguous. I wish you the best in your writing.

Yours,

Denise Rutledge
Writing My Own Book



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