

**Two Game Sweep:
How Mid-Sized Publishers Make the Decision
to Release Two Physical Formats of a Book,
using *Black Ice* as a Case Study**

by

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Abstract

This report analyzes mid-sized publishers' decisions regarding whether it is profitable to release a second physical format of a previously published book and the publicity practices for second releases at ECW Press, an independent Canadian publisher in Toronto, Ontario. The first chapter of this report describes the book being used as a case study, *Black Ice*, and discusses ECW Press's decision to publish it. The second chapter summarizes the history of two-format publishing and how this influences the decisions pertaining to formats that publishers make today. Chapter three discusses how ECW Press decides which format is most appropriate for a book and the key factors that indicate to them that printing a subsequent trade paperback edition of a previously released hardcover will be profitable. The final chapter uses *Black Ice* as a publicity case study, demonstrating how mid-sized publishers publicize the release of the second edition of a book and how it differs from promoting the first release.

Keywords: publishing; ECW Press; publicity; marketing; physical formats; two-format publishing

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Introduction

ECW Press has been established in Toronto since 1977.¹ This now eclectic press was originally launched as a journal of literary criticism in 1974, entitled *Essays on Canadian Writing*, an idea that founder Jack David came up with prior to a graduate seminar class he was taking at the time. In 1977, the editors of the journal, Jack David and Robert Lecker, shifted focus and began publishing academic books and bibliographies of Canadian authors, under the publishing house name ECW Press; the monogram “ECW” stood for “Essays on Canadian Writing.” The company sold their books mainly to the academic and library market, which at the time was a steady client. Over the next decade, the company branched out into different genres, such as Canadian fiction and poetry. Diversifying their publishing mandate proved to be a positive plan: library grant cuts, as well as provincial and federal funding cuts, in 1995 prevented libraries from buying as many academic titles as they had previously, thus lowering the profitability of these titles for ECW. The press was able to stay in business and continue publishing because they had previously expanded their publishing mandate. Rowland Lorimer states that it was a single book that changed ECW’s overall publishing strategy in the 1990s: a k.d. lang biography.² This book sold particularly well in the American book market, which opened ECW’s eyes to the US book-buying market. From that point on, ECW began to add popular culture titles on topics such as music, celebrity biography, sports, TV series, and movies — a portion of which sold across different national boundaries. Interestingly, it was when the company started publishing pop culture titles that sold well in American markets that the company expanded the most, even though they were founded on the principle of publishing purely Canadian works.

Company management has changed minimally in the past 40 years: Jack David bought out his partner Robert Lecker in 2003.³ In 2014, David sold the company to David Caron (who had worked at ECW since 2004). Today, Caron and David are co-publishers, with Caron owning the

1 Laura Pastore, “Culture and Commerce: Corporate Publishing at ECW Press,” Master’s Project Report, Simon Fraser University, 2015 (Vancouver: Simon Fraser University, 2015).

2 Rowland Lorimer, *Ultra Libris: Policy, Technology, and the Creative Economy of Book Publishing in Canada* (Toronto: ECW Press, 2012), 31.

3 Robert Lecker, “Reflections on ECW,” in *40: ECW Press*, ed. Michael Holmes (Toronto: ECW Press, 2014), 10.

company and David as an acquiring editor. There are six editors, two sales and marketing staff, three publicists, three production managers, two operations coordinators, and often one intern comprising the company in 2016. As many publishing houses do, ECW also utilizes freelance editors and designers. ECW publishes around 50 titles per year in two publishing seasons: spring and fall.

What makes ECW Press distinct from other mid-sized Canadian publishers is how diverse the company is; while some mid-sized publishers stick mainly to one genre (for example, Greystone Books in Vancouver publishes exclusively non-fiction titles), ECW Press publishes everything from corporate books to sports titles, poetry to genre fiction, and literary titles to Taylor Swift biographies. ECW began publishing sports books (primarily wrestling and poker) and pop culture books in the 1990s, including their wildly popular television series guides (for example, *Finding Lost* and *Bite Me!*). These books are published for a large trade audience (not only in the US but around the world) and sell many copies, which allows the company to publish titles that sell at a lesser volume, such as poetry. Along with these new genres, ECW publishes custom corporate books, literary fiction, and memoirs; a balancing act akin to tightrope walking (coincidentally, a number of titles published by ECW are memoirs of people who have been involved in circuses). Since the 1970s, the letters “ECW” have changed from standing for “Essays on Canadian Writing” to “Entertainment, Culture, Writing.” For entertainment, they publish film and TV books, music books, and sports books. Contributing to culture, they publish travel, humour, art, biography, memoir, popular science, and business books. And for writing, they publish fiction, poetry, and literary fiction.⁴ The front window of their Toronto office states that they are “Publishing Curiously Compelling Books.” As ECW co-publisher David Caron writes in his contributing chapter of ECW’s 40th-anniversary commemorative book, the company doesn’t publish pop culture titles purely to financially support the literary and poetry titles.⁵ While the widely-selling pop culture books do financially allow the company to continue publishing smaller print runs of genres such as poetry, each title they publish must contribute to their publishing mandate. The company is passionate about their titles and they do not publish works to merely “fluff up” their revenue if they do

4 Lorimer, *Ultra Libris*, 31.

5 David Caron, “Each and Every Day,” in *40: ECW Press*, ed. Michael Holmes (Toronto: ECW Press, 2014), 161.

not believe in the title and that it contributes to entertainment, culture, and writing. Even though they publish a wide variety of subjects and genres, all of the titles are cared about deeply by ECW staff.

Laura Pastore, a Simon Fraser University's Master of Publishing graduate who has been working in the editorial department at ECW Press since her internship in 2013, wrote about corporate publishing at ECW in her project report "Culture and Commerce: Corporate Publishing at ECW Press."⁶ She states that "the Press's mandate has remained the same since the early nineties: publish a mix of commercial and literary works that strive to bring readers the best authors and the finest writing in Canadian publishing"⁷ and that remains true in 2016. ECW Press's website boasts that "*Publishers Weekly* recognized ECW Press as one of the most diversified independent publishers in North America. ECW Press has published close to 1,000 books that are distributed throughout the English-speaking world and translated into dozens of languages."⁸

This report consists of four chapters. The first chapter gives a background of the book being used as a case study, *Black Ice*, and why ECW Press decided to publish it. It explains how ECW acquired the manuscript and sales of the book during the first couple months post-release. The second chapter begins with a short history of two-format publishing in North America and the UK, and how this history influences the decisions publishers make pertaining to formats when putting a book through the publishing process. Chapter three analyzes how ECW Press decides which format is most appropriate for a book and whether releasing a second print edition in a later season will be profitable or not. It also discusses publishing strategy regarding format and release date. The fourth and final chapter of this report compares the differences in publicity between releasing the first format of a book and releasing the second physical format of a book. It outlines the basics of how ECW publicizes the first edition of a new release and contrasts it to how ECW publicizes a subsequent trade paperback edition of the same book. Using *Black Ice* as a case study, this report discusses a medium-sized independent Canadian publisher's decisions regarding when it is profitable to release a hardcover format as an initial release and

6 Pastore, "Culture and Commerce."

7 Ibid.

8 "About ECW Press," ECW Press website, accessed August 23, 2016, <http://ecwpress.com/pages/about-us>.

then a subsequent trade paperback edition of the same book a few seasons later. The purpose of this report is to analyze the state of two-format book releases in the Canadian book publishing industry today and explore how mid-sized publishers make their decisions.

Chapter 1: Behind *Black Ice*

1.1 Political Sports Titles

A few ECW sports titles stand out for being more political and social justice-oriented than a standard sports memoir. In 2012 they released *The King of New Orleans: How the Junkyard Dog Became Professional Wrestling's First Black Superhero*, which tells the story of Sylvester Ritter, who broke colour barriers in professional wrestling by becoming the first Black wrestler to be made the undisputed top of his profession. This book chronicles his career and puts it in the context of racial tensions in New Orleans, colour barriers in professional sports, and Black history. In fall 2016, ECW published the story of how Pat Patterson — the first openly gay professional wrestling superstar — changed the WWE, entitled *Accepted: How the First Gay Superstar Changed the WWE*. Patterson gives insight on what it was like to be an openly gay athlete in the 1970s and '80s and how he changed public perceptions. This project report takes a close look at the trade paperback release of *Black Ice*, the story of the first Black American hockey player in the NHL.

1.2 *Black Ice*

Black Ice: The Val James Story is a non-fiction book written by Val James and John Gallagher, published in hardcover by ECW Press in February 2015. It is the story of the first Black American hockey player in the NHL, Val James, and the challenges he faced playing professional hockey. Valmore Curtis James played for over a decade in the AHL and a total of 11 games in the NHL for the Buffalo Sabres (seven games) and Toronto Maple Leafs (four games) from 1971–1988.¹ He made a name for himself on the ice as an enforcer and fought some of the top heavyweights in both the AHL and NHL. His memoir discusses his hockey career, the racism he faced from both players and fans, and how his toughest fight was overcoming the discrimination opposing him as he pursued playing the sport he loves professionally. James's story is remarkable not only because he was one of the first Black NHL players, but also because he was an American playing in the NHL at a time when most

¹ "Val James," Hockey DB online database, hockedb.com, accessed August 27, 2016, <http://www.hockeydb.com/ihdb/stats/pdisplay.php?pid=6582>.

of the players in the league were Canadian. James had to push against being both an American and being Black in order to make it to the NHL. *Black Ice* was initially published as a hardcover and will be released as a trade paperback in January 2017. This memoir's first release received media coverage across North America: it was featured in a Fox News Black History Month documentary, on NHL.com, on NPR's *Morning Edition*, on ESPN's *Olbermann*, in *Newsday*, in the *L.A. Times*, and in *The New York Times*.

As a mid-sized Canadian publisher, ECW receives manuscripts both unsolicited and from agents. The proposal for *Black Ice* came to ECW's acquiring sports editor, Michael Holmes, as an unsolicited email. One of the co-authors, John Gallagher, contacted ECW with an outline for the book and a sample chapter. Much of the book was already written. Gallagher was drawn to ECW as a potential publisher for this book because he noticed the previous hockey books ECW had released and thought that this book would be a good fit for the company. Gallagher was an informed and well-prepared first-time co-author because he researched and recognized the significance of ECW's publishing list. "The books that a publisher [has previously] publishe[d] are ... a signal to authors seeking an appropriate home for their manuscript — a signal that often goes unrecognized by new authors."² Holmes liked what he read and pitched the book to the rest of the editorial team at a weekly editorial meeting.

This book came to be written because John Gallagher, an assistant US States Attorney from Philadelphia, sought Val James out and asked him to write his life story. Gallagher had been a fan of James during the 1980s and still remembered him three decades later. As a prosecutor, Gallagher felt that it was his duty to restore a sense of justice to those who had been denied justice in the past.³ Gallagher wanted to tell James's story in order to undo some of the injustices James had faced during his playing days. For years he had wanted to find James and meet him; over the past decade, Gallagher spent time coaching hockey to inner-city kids in Harlem, New York, which made him curious

2 Lorimer, *Ultra Libris*, 30.

3 Michael Holmes (Senior Editor, ECW Press), in discussion with the author, June 13, 2016.

about the perseverance of Black professional hockey players⁴ and led him to seek out James. Gallagher, like acquiring editor Holmes, felt that this book discusses important social justice issues and that publishing it might give James the recognition that he had never received when he was a professional hockey player. Gallagher also knew that James was the first Black American player to play in the NHL, which is a story that he thought would make a great book. After ten years of searching, Gallagher managed to track James down in Ontario.⁵ Even though James retired from professional ice hockey in 1988, it wasn't until 2015 that his story had the opportunity to be told.

1.3 Acquiring the Title

The editorial team was wary of acquiring this title because hockey books are never a sure seller. There are so many new hockey books introduced to the market every season and one can never be sure which titles will sell. ECW had a fairly established audience for their hockey titles in 2015 as they had published 13 hockey books between fall 2011 and fall 2014. They published one in 2011, two in 2012, four in 2013, and six in 2014. *Black Ice* was pitched to be a spring 2015 book. Still, the editorial team was not sure that this book would sell. Holmes persuaded the editorial team by pitching the book as a sports book with a social justice slant. ECW Press has a history of publishing sports books that expand the scope of sport to discuss issues that are larger than competition, such as racism in *The King of New Orleans* and long-term health issues in *Concussion Inc.* The ECW editorial team recognizes and believes that “while books are material objects, their defining identity is cultural.”⁶ The editorial team at ECW agreed with Gallagher in viewing *Black Ice* as an important sociological book and believing that it contributes to hockey history, social justice issues, and culture. When considering acquiring a title, the publisher must look at not only the size of the market for the book but also what the content of the book can contribute to society because “one book can change the world — even one book read by a limited number of people.”⁷ The editorial team agreed to acquire the book.

4 Matt Gelb, “Black Ice’ Is Tale of NHL Pioneer Val James,” *Philly-archives*, March 13, 2015. Accessed August 23, 2016, http://articles.philly.com/2015-03-13/news/60053342_1_john-gallagher-hockey-game-hockey-fan.

5 Sarah Dunn (Publicist, ECW Press), in discussion with the author, June 28, 2016.

6 Lorimer, *Ultra Libris*, 3.

7 Lorimer, *Ultra Libris*, 10.

The company did not perform any specific market research prior to acquiring this book; ECW knew that their previous hockey books had sold through (lifetime sales) as many as 2,300 copies in Canada and as many as 4,200 copies in the US.⁸

There were two primary target markets for this book: older hockey fans and an audience that is interested in Black rights. Regarding the first audience, these older hockey fans are more specifically fans who watched the NHL in the 1980s and might remember James's story. By setting the book's release date in February (Black History Month) instead of October, this book was thus also marketed to an audience who is concerned with Black issues and civil rights. The size of this presumed audience influenced the initial print run. It was not assumed that the mass hockey fan audience would be interested in this book and thus it was not published in the Christmas gift-buying season. ECW predicted a smaller, more specialized older-hockey-fan and Black-issues audience for *Black Ice*, and so planned to release the book during Black History Month.

Val James is still a recognizable name in the eastern parts of North America, especially around the Toronto and Buffalo areas where he had played professionally, so the editorial team presumed a market size of at least 2,000 (between the US and Canada) for this book. Gallagher had many media contacts left over from his past career as a police officer, so the publicity department knew he would be able to obtain some media attention for the book. For example, they knew that Bob Costas (an American broadcaster for NBC Sports) would cover the book.⁹ (In fact, Bob Costas's blurb of the book is printed on the front cover of both editions.) Because Val James is still a recognizable name in the northeastern United States, ECW thought that they would be able to get James on American Sports Radio shows to promote the book as well. The book was released February, 2015, in both hardcover format and as an ebook. The hardcover was distributed throughout North America and the ebook was distributed worldwide, both in English.

8 ECW Press Filemaker Pro Database. "BISS. Monthly Report." Internal database.

9 Holmes, discussion.

1.4 Initial Sales

The initial sell through of the book within its first three months of publication was 1,028 copies.¹⁰ Its initial print run was 2000 copies. In February 2015 (including pre-sales), 478 copies were sold in North America (24 percent of the entire first print run). In March 2016, 298 physical copies were sold in North America and in April, 252 physical copies were sold in North America. Significantly more copies were sold in the US than in Canada — as ECW expected — because of James’s previous fan base in the northeastern United States. Of these first three months, 686 copies were sold in the US, which was 67 percent of the total copies sold.

Putting these initial sales in context, as of August 8, 2016, the total lifetime physical sales of *Black Ice* were 1,295 copies sold to consumers in the US and 396 copies sold to consumers in Canada. The digital ebook was released at the same time as the hardcover and had sold 814 copies worldwide.¹¹ ECW was happy with how the hardcover book’s final product turned out and with the initial sales of the hardcover, as it had sold through 65 percent of the initial print run within the first year of publication. They were also happy that it had received large-scale media attention, which was good for the company, for the authors, and for the book. Both authors were happy with the amount of media attention the hardcover received, especially James, who wrote an afterword for the trade paperback edition discussing how the publicity that surrounded the release of the first edition had made him grateful that he chose to share his story publicly.

10 ECW Press Filemaker Pro Database. “BISS. Monthly Report.” Internal database.

11 Ibid.

Chapter 2: History of Two-Format Book Publishing

2.1 Paperback Revolutions

Before the state of two-format publishing in North America today can be examined, the history of how two-format publishing developed in both the UK and North America must be considered. According to John B. Thompson's *Merchants of Culture*, hardcover books were the most popular book format up until the late 1930s.¹ Some historians might argue that dime novels and Penny Dreadfuls were just as popular as hardcovers, but Thompson's research shows that at this point in time hardcover books had the most sales. This changed with what Thompson refers to as the "paperback revolution": a time period in which mass-market paperback imprints were established, such as Pocket Books, Bantam, Dell, and Fawcett. The man that led this revolution and is long accepted as the founder of the modern paperback movement is Allen Lane of Penguin Books.² Accompanied by his two brothers, he created a paperback reprint series in 1935 in the publishing house that the three of them worked for, The Bodley Head. Penguin Books started as a series, reprints of quality fiction and nonfiction, to be produced with attractive paper-covers and sold at sixpence — the same price as ten cigarettes.³ Paperback books at this time were always reprints of previously published hardcover books. This is what came to be the paperback book — a book made from lesser quality paper and binding that sold at a much lower price than hardcovers. The idea of a new book form came both from Lane's desire to sell books in train stations and from his intuition that the public would buy quality literature if it was at a low enough price (that is, if quality literature was offered at a more affordable price than hardcover books were at the time). While books have been issued in paper covers or wrappers since the sixteenth century (or even earlier), the start of Penguin is generally accepted as the beginning of the modern paperback revolution because it was the first paperback movement on as grand a scale and it was the only paperback movement that stuck.⁴ (These Penguin paperbacks are

1 John N. Thompson, *Merchants of Culture: The Publishing Business in the Twenty-First Century* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 34.

2 J.E. Morpurgo, *Allen Lane: King Penguin* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1979), 14.

3 Morpurgo, *Allen Lane: King Penguin*, 80.

4 John Feather, *A Dictionary of Book History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 195.

the same format as what are referred to today as “mass-market paperbacks”: books that are approximately four inches by seven inches and printed on thin paper. These are similar to but different from trade paperbacks in both format and cover price. (Trade paperback books were to come later in publishing history.) Much of the demand for paperback books at this time was fueled by the Second World War. Soldiers wanted small, cheap, lightweight books that they could carry around with them easily. Penguin paperbacks were easy to mail overseas and the demand created by soldiers fueled the modern paperback revolution.

Lewis A. Coser et al. state that Lane’s paperback revolution was actually the third paperback revolution to occur, as two smaller revolutions had previously taken place in the United States.⁵ The first paperback revolution occurred before the United States government recognized copyright on foreign works, and much of the first (and second) revolution was fueled by piracy. The first paperback movement occurred in the early 1840s when some newspapers started printed English and French novels in cheap editions and distributed them as supplements to the daily newspaper. These paperback books were printed on newsprint and distributed to customers for very cheap, because they were using newspaper distribution rates. This paperback revolution was cut short in 1845 when the US Post Office withdrew newspapers’ permits to mail these supplements at inexpensive rates. Without the low price of distribution, this revolution fizzled out.

The second paperback revolution had much in common with the more widely known third revolution (the modern paperback revolution started by Lane). Lane’s paperback revolution coincided with the Second World War, and thus much of the demand for small books that were easy to carry around in a pocket was driven by soldiers. The second paperback revolution coincided with the American Civil War, and the demand for those paperbacks was also driven by soldiers involved in that war. This revolution occurred between 1860 and 1865, with the Beadle brothers selling paperback pocket-size books (dime novels) for ten cents.⁶ This revolution was quenched by the United

5 Lewis A. Coser, Charles Kadushin and Walter W. Powell, *Books: The Culture and Commerce of Publishing* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1982), 20.

6 *Ibid.*, 21.

States's adoption of a copyright law in the 1890s, which put an end to the abundance of piracy that allowed mass-market paperbacks to flourish in the first two revolutions. From the 1890s to 1935, hardcover books returned to being the most popular and abundant format of books sold.

The modern paperback revolution was preceded by the public library movement in Britain, which at that time had reached all parts of the nation. In addition to fueling the public's desire to read, it also strengthened the impulse towards book ownership. Hardcover books, unfortunately, had a prohibitive price tag. This public desire contributed to Lane's decision to print and sell his reprint paperback Penguin books.⁷ After a rough start with pre-sales, once the new Penguin paperbacks hit the sales racks they were an immediate success. While many publishers thought that Penguins would never succeed because the company would not be able to make enough money by selling books at such a low cover price, Lane believed that there was a market for quality literature at low prices and the way that Penguins would make money was through mass sales.⁸ These paperbacks were cheap to manufacture, physically lighter and smaller than hardcovers, but because they were sold at such a low cover price, the net-profit-per-book sold was very small (unlike the more expensive hardcover books). The only way that Penguins could make a profit was if they were printed in huge print runs, which lowered the cost of printing per book, and sold in huge quantities, which they ultimately were. (The concept of gross profit and cost of goods sold will be returned to in the following sub-chapters.) Lane achieved selling these books in huge quantities because they were sold everywhere: conventional bookstores, railway bookstalls, department stores, tobacconists, and tea shops — anywhere that Lane thought that the public might be persuaded to impulse buy. Thus 1935 began to be known in publishing as the year Penguins were established and the modern paperback revolution began. In 1936 Penguin Books ceased being published jointly by The Bodley Head and became a separate company, Penguin Books Ltd. The paperback book was here to stay.

⁷ Morpurgo, *Allen Lane: King Penguin*, 85.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

2.2 Hardcover and Trade Paperback Publishing

After World War II, several other paperback publishing houses were formed and paperbacks sales grew enormously in the 1940s as paperback books continued to be sold in drugstores, supermarkets, airports, and train terminals. The rise of mall-store chains in the later 1960s and '70s further stimulated the sales of paperbacks (both trade paperback and mass-market paperback) and therefore strengthened the positions of these relatively new paperback publishing houses; these paperback houses only released reprints in paperback editions. This was at a time in publishing in which hardcover publishing houses and paperback publishing houses were completely distinct. Both kinds of publishing houses had specific business models and work flows, thus — as the book publishing industry grew — by the 1960s the publishing industry in North America had separated itself into two separate businesses. Some houses published paperbacks and other houses published hardcovers. Hardcover publishing houses were the only publishers to acquire previously unpublished books. They had to pay advances to authors (and royalties; usually advances against royalties) to acquire books but paperback houses had to pay hardcover houses to acquire paperback printing rights and also pay an advance against royalties to the author. The hardcover format of a title would be released by a hardcover publishing house first and then the house would sell paperback printing rights to a paperback publishing house. The hardcover format would sell at a higher price point and have a better production quality. It was this selling of the rights to a paperback house that started the trend of a book coming out first in hardcover and then later being released in paperback. The pattern of a more expensive, hardcover edition of a new title being released first and a cheaper, paperback edition of the same title being released at a later date — which is still seen in the book publishing landscape today — came from how the book publishing industry was structured in the 1960s. The hardcover publisher would generally do the editorial work on a manuscript and then sell the edited manuscript to a paperback publishing house, the timeline of which meant that the paperback format of the title would be released after the hardcover format. As the paperback revolution gained momentum, it became the driving force of the book publishing industry.⁹ Paperback houses would sell more copies

⁹ Thompson, *Merchants of Culture*, 35.

of books than hardcover houses and the demand for paperbacks grew so much that the sale of paperback rights became a principal source of revenue for hardcover publishers. Paperbacks became so popular and created such a demand that hardcover publishing houses began to rely on the income they received from selling rights to paperback houses: hardcover profit margins per book were larger (because they sold at a higher cover price which, after bookstore discounts, was still larger than paperback margins) but they sold fewer copies than paperbacks. “While the paperback business relied on the hardcover business for product, the hardcover houses depended heavily on royalty income from paperback sales to run their businesses.”¹⁰ Paperback publishing houses had slimmer profits-per-unit (especially after bookstore discounts) but they sold at a much higher volume, as they were distributed at many more venues (for example, supermarkets and train stations). Paperback books also piggy-backed off of the marketing previously done by hardcover houses, so the marketing and publicity costs were minimal in comparison.

As stated previously, the business models between these two kinds of publishers were distinct. Hardcover publishing houses operated on a quality-goods business model: they produced a high-quality product and sold it at a high cover price. The books cost more to print because they had smaller print runs and the supplies were more expensive, but the end product sold for more. Table 1 on the next page is a theoretical example demonstrating the differences in profit structures between the two format publishing houses.

(Please note that Table 1 on the following page is a theoretical single title gross profit comparison for clarity’s sake; it is by no means a complete profit and loss statement nor an income statement. Operating costs and government grants have been ignored for simplicity’s sake. Only net revenue and cost of goods sold for a single title have been included.)

This example uses the basic single title gross profit financial statement demonstrated by Thomas Woll in his book *Publishing for Profit*.¹¹ Woll defines the gross profit of a title to be the net

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Thomas Woll, *Publishing for Profit* (Tucson: Fisher Books, 1998), 114.

Theoretical Gross Profit Comparison of one Hardcover Publishing House Title and one Mass-Market Paperback Publishing House Title

	Hardcover	Mass-Market Paperback
<u>Revenue:</u>		
Print run	10,000	100,000
Sell through amount (70% of print run)	7,000	70,000
Cover price	\$30	\$12
Bookseller's price (50% of cover price)	\$15	\$6
Rights sold	\$50,000	
Net Revenue:	\$155,000	\$420,000
<u>Cost of Goods Sold:</u>		
Acquiring costs	\$10,000	\$100,000
Editing	\$5,000	
Design and typesetting	\$4,000	\$3,000
Printing and binding	\$25,000	\$50,000
Marketing, publicity, and distribution expenses (title specific):	\$40,000	\$150,000
Net Expenses:	\$84,000	\$303,000
Gross Profit:	\$71,000	\$117,000

Table 1 Gross Profit Comparison Example

revenue (sales revenue and rights sold revenue) minus the cost of goods sold.¹² Cost of goods sold refers to the costs incurred to produce a book. These costs are the costs that are repeated each time a book is printed (primarily the paper, printing and binding but also marketing and publicity for the book), royalties paid to the author, and development costs. Development costs are everything that gets the book into a store to be sold: that includes editing costs, typesetting costs, and design costs.¹³ Marketing, publicity, and distribution costs are for the specific single title only. Table 1 is an example that uses numbers that were realistic during the later part of the paperback revolution and before the hardcover revolution (1960s).

In this example, to bring a title to market at this time with a theoretical print run of 10,000 hardcover books, a hardcover house had to pay to acquire the book (advance against royalties to the author); pay editing costs; pay design and typesetting costs; pay printing and binding costs (\$2.50 per book at 10,000 books = \$25,000); and pay for marketing, publicity, and distribution. Using a third-party distribution company usually costs the publisher around 25 percent of the sales revenue.¹⁴ Distribution costs for this title would have been around \$26,000 and marketing and publicity would have cost \$14,000. Therefore (in this example), creating a print run of 10,000 copies of a new book cost hardcover publishers \$84,000, which is the cost of goods sold for this title. If this print run sold through 70 percent of the print run, then 7,000 copies of the book would be sold to consumers. Bookstores receive on average a 50 percent discount on books when buying from a publisher — if the cover cost of this hardcover book was \$30, then a bookstore would pay the publisher \$15 per book. If 7,000 copies of a book were sold to bookstores at \$15 per book, then the sales revenue the publisher collected was \$105,000. The revenue from selling paperback rights to a paperback publisher is then added to the sales revenue in order to get a net revenue of \$155,000. This net revenue combined with the cost of goods sold provides the hardcover publisher a theoretical gross profit of \$71,000 for the title.

12 *Ibid.*, 122.

13 *Ibid.*, 117.

14 Jack David, in discussion with the author, November 8, 2016.

Paperback publishing houses (which at the time were mostly producing mass-market paperbacks) operated off of a mass-market goods business model; they produced a cheaper product but sold so many copies that the return exceeded the mass manufacturing costs. Their printing and binding costs per unit were low because the books were printed in huge quantities and while their profit-per-book was low, they sold so many copies that they would make a profit (as is the basic business model for mass-produced goods). In addition, paperback publishing houses had different up-front costs than hardcover publishers. Hardcover publishers paid more in editing costs and marketing costs (the manuscript that came to the paperback publishers was already edited and the book had already been marketed to the public), but paperback houses paid more up-front in printing and distribution costs because their scale was so much larger. Acquiring costs were different for paperback publishing houses: instead of only paying an advance against royalties to the author, paperback publishing houses had to pay to procure paperback printing rights as well as paying royalties. Both the hardcover publisher and the author received money from the paperback publishing house. In this example, the paperback publishing house had to pay \$100,000 total in order to print the title, the first half of which went to the hardcover publisher as rights sold revenue and the second half went to the author as an advance against royalties. It is important to note that not every hardcover book was turned into a paperback: paperback publishing houses would only buy the printing rights for books that sold extremely well in hardcover. Paperback houses had to be confident that they would be able to sell most of their large print run. Therefore, the books that were available in paperback editions formed a list of the best-selling hardcover books. In a mass-market paperback hypothetical print run of 100,000 copies, a paperback publisher would pay acquiring costs (buying the paperback printing rights from the hardcover house and paying an advance against royalties to the author); design and typesetting; printing and binding (\$0.50 per book at 100,000 books = \$50,000); and for distribution costs (and some minimal publicity and marketing). Distribution costs for this title were a lot larger than for the hardcover title because of the higher sales revenue. This theoretical print run of 100,000 books would then have \$303,000 in net expenses. If 70 percent of these books sold through, to

bookstores and other vendors at a 50 percent discount of the \$12 cover price, then the paperback publishing house made \$420,000 in sales revenue. Since they had no rights to sell, their sales revenue was equivalent to their net revenue. This net revenue combined with the cost of goods sold gave the paperback publishing house a theoretical gross profit of \$117,000 (keep in mind that this is a theoretical example for a mass-market paperback. A trade paperback example would have higher printing costs, as the paper would be of higher quality and the print run would be smaller).

As can be seen from these two theoretical examples, the two publishing houses operated off of completely distinct business methods with different scales. Hardcover houses made profits from selling paperback rights and selling fewer copies of more expensive books, but paperback publishers made profits from selling hundreds of thousands of copies of a mass-market product. Hardcover houses relied on selling paperback rights and paperback houses did not make much of a profit if they did not sell hundreds of thousands of copies.

According to Thompson, by the mid-1970s paperback houses had begun to realize that this system of completely separate publishing format–houses was flawed because they were dependent upon the hardcover houses to obtain publishing rights to print paperback books. There were cases where the publisher at a paperback house came up with the idea for a book, but was obliged to find a hardcover house to publish the initial hardcover edition, so that they could then buy the paperback printing rights from them.¹⁵ By the end of the 1970s, paperback houses began to print their own original books in paperback and then began publishing their own hardcover books (and applying some of their mass-market business techniques to these hardcovers, thus making the hardcovers less expensive to produce). It was this application of mass-market techniques to hardcover publishing in the late 1970s that popularized trade paperback books: books that are cheaper than traditional hardcovers but are more comparable in quality to hardcovers than to mass-market paperbacks.¹⁶ As mentioned previously, trade paperbacks differ from mass-market paperbacks in paper quality and

15 Thompson, *Merchants of Culture*, 36.

16 Andrew Liptak, "The Rise Of The Paperback Novel," *The Kirkus Review*, January 15, 2015. Accessed October 7, 2016. <https://www.kirkusreviews.com/features/rise-paperback-novel/>.

size. Most mass-market paperbacks have a trim size of four inches by seven inches and are printed on thin, cheap paper, with a poor-quality binding. Trade paperbacks are usually around six inches by nine inches and look more similar to a hardcover book than to a mass-market paperback. They are printed on higher quality paper and have a sturdier binding. Trade paperback books generally have a cover price that is higher than a mass-market paperback but less than a hardcover book. Trade paperback books were pioneered by Jason Epstein (a young trainee editor at Doubleday) in the early 1950s, when he had the idea of reprinting quality books in a sturdy paperback format. This format would be larger than the mass-market paperback and printed on better quality paper with larger typefaces. While trade paperbacks had existed since the 1950s, they did not become popular until the hardcover revolution, when quality formats of books became less expensive.¹⁷ As the close of the 1970s approached, publishing houses began to publish all three physical formats of books within the same house.

Thompson refers to this time period as the “hardcover revolution” because the system of an initial hardcover release (selling to a specific market) and then a subsequent release of a trade paperback to a slightly different market, and finally a mass-market paperback edition for another different audience (all by the same publisher) became commonplace. Not every publisher published a single title in all three physical formats but it became common practice to initially publish a book in hardcover and then subsequently release the book in at least one of the paperback forms at a later date (for the popular books). This practice gained momentum as the chains of book superstores spread out across North America and all book sales increased. As mentioned before, hardcover books had become more affordable to a wider audience at this point. When paperback houses started to release their own trade hardcovers, they applied their mass-market business model to these hardcovers, decreased their production costs, and thus were able to sell them at a lower price than hardcovers had been sold for in the 1950s and '60s.¹⁸ This made them more affordable and, once again, hardcover books sales numbers were on the rise. As the sales of hardcovers increased throughout the 1980s and

¹⁷ Thompson, *Merchants of Culture*, 39.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 36.

'90s, the old relationship between hardcover and paperback publishing was inverted. In the 1950s and '60s, paperback publishing was the financial driving force of the trade publishing business, and in the 1980s and '90s, hardcover publishing increasingly became the financial foundation of the industry with their higher profit margins.¹⁹

This large gain of market by hardcover releases was primarily influenced by the price difference between hardcovers and paperbacks decreasing: before the 1970s, it was common for the paperback version of a book to cost one tenth of the price of the hardcover format. By the early 2000s, hardcovers had decreased in cover price to be sold at a 3:1 ratio (that is, the hardcover version would only cost three times as much as the paperback version).²⁰ This price difference also helped to further popularize trade paperbacks, as they hit a middle price point but were still a good quality product. Many hardcover books were repackaged as trade paperback books instead of mass-market paperbacks because this produced a better quality product. That being said, extremely popular books generally existed in all three formats, so they could be sold to different markets.²¹ Allen Lane's original hypothesis that there was a public demand for quality literature at low prices remains true today: it is merely which book format is the most in demand and is affordable that has changed throughout the past century.

2.3 How Paperback History Influences Publishing Today

All of this history has led to the practices pertaining to formats that publishers use today. Today, large-sized publishers (publishers like Penguin Random House or Simon & Schuster) with sufficient cash-flow and liquid assets often publish their lead titles in hardcover first and then, after a window of time, they release another edition of the same book in trade paper. As discussed in *The Economist* article "Why Books Come Out In Hardback Before Paperback,"²² this method is called "windowing."

Windowing is a strategy that attempts to sell to the most markets possible. It is the same process

¹⁹ Ibid., 37.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 40.

²² C. C., "Why Books Come Out In Hardback Before Paperback," *The Economist*, October 15, 2014. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/economist-explains/2014/10/economist-explains-15>.

used by film companies when they keep a movie in theatres for a period of time in order to obtain sales from one audience that wants to see a particular film immediately and then later releasing the film to DVD as so to obtain sales from another audience that would rather pay a different price to buy the film and does not mind waiting. These two distinct markets are able to be reached through the releases of the same book at two different price points (and, as discussed further on, sometimes at two distinct times).

Some publishers utilize this strategy of staggering release dates between clothbound hardcover and trade paperback because they believe it will make the most profit and appeal to the largest market; a publisher will release a hardcover version of a book first and after a window of time release a cheaper, more mass-market–appealing paperback format. According to *The Economist*,²³ this window market for a more expensive hardcover book is made up of book collectors, the library market, gift-givers, and literary book critics. Each of these consumer markets is willing to pay more for a hardcover format of the book instead of waiting for a cheaper paperback edition to come out.

Many large publishers shy away from releasing the hardcover format and trade paperback format of a title in the same season. The strategy behind this is that they want to force readers who want to read the book within the first year of its release to buy the more expensive hardcover format of the title. They will release a cheaper paperback version of the title in a subsequent season, in order to obtain sales from a different audience that is more price sensitive, but only after trying to force the hand of the public who want to read the book in a timely manner. By staggering release dates for the different formats, these publishers can avoid channel competition with their own books.

The practice of windowing is generally used by large publishers with books that are selling to large markets. Commercial fiction and high-profile non-fiction are examples of these books; large publishers will hope to sell perhaps 20,000 copies in the hardcover, and then release a trade paperback version of the book and aim to sell 50,000 copies of that edition to a more price-sensitive market (these are conservative numbers, not best-seller numbers). Printing this amount of stock is

23 Ibid.

feasible for these large publishers and thus large publishers are the ones who have been the most informed by the history of paperback publishing. However, small and mid-sized publishers have been influenced in different ways. For example, it is extremely rare to see any publisher initially release a book in paperback and then a subsequent edition in hardcover (unless it is a special limited edition or anniversary edition). Mass-market paperbacks are usually reprints — it would be uncommon to find the initial release of a book that is a mass-market paperback. One prominent publisher that is an exception to this rule is Harlequin; Harlequin prints some of their initial releases in mass-market paperback, as that is appropriate for their romance titles.²⁴ These titles usually only exist in mass-market paperback form. Trade paperback books maintain a sweet-spot price point between a cheap, poor-quality mass-market paperback and a more expensive, sturdier hardcover. The sequence and history of format publishing has influenced today's publishing trends and all book publishers have been affected, no matter the size of their company.

²⁴ David, discussion.

Chapter 3: ECW's Decision to Release Two Formats

3.1 ECW's Strategy Regarding Format

Unlike Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster, ECW Press is not a large publishing house. They are considered a mid-sized independent Canadian book publisher because they employ 12–18 people at any given time and publish approximately 50 titles a year. Therefore they do not have the same amount of cash-flow flexibility nor parent-company equity that large-sized publishers do. They are not able to invest large amounts of money in huge print runs and stock in the same way that large-sized publishers can. This influences ECW's business decisions and publishing model.

Anytime a book is updated (with a new binding, a new cover, an added foreword or afterword) in theory it becomes a new edition with a new ISBN.¹ It is important to note that the trade paperback format of *Black Ice* is considered a new edition of the book. Even though the only typesetting change to the original manuscript was adding an afterword, the trade paperback format of *Black Ice* has a new ISBN and is considered a new edition. The two editions have the same trim size.

The decision regarding format for the first printing of a title always starts with considering the format that would best suit the content. ECW believes that a hardcover format denotes a higher quality book that contains an important story, which lends a sense of seriousness to the title. This is why many of ECW's established mystery series and select sports titles are published in hardcover first. In general, ECW prints most of its titles in trade paperback format because it is more affordable and it suits the content of a pop culture book well. To ECW, a paperback cover says that a book is “not too serious, a great read, and accessible for most readers.” It is the more serious stories that ECW prints in hardcover, such as memoirs and mysteries.

ECW rarely plans in advance to publish a title in two physical formats; when they do, it is generally for select genres and titles. According to production manager Troy Cunningham, when ECW decides to publish a title the standard procedure is to first determine which physical format

¹ Troy Cunningham, in discussion with the author, October 11, 2016.

is most appropriate for the title. If it is decided that the physical format that would benefit the title the most is paperback, then the discussion stops there and the title will most likely only exist as a paperback and in digital. Some titles for ECW generally start with hardcover because it best suits the content. Troy Cunningham states that:

We most often do [hardcover] with the idea of doing a [trade paperback] in the following year (for mysteries), without any regard for sales numbers. If a non-fiction or memoir does really well we may do a [trade paperback] if there is moderate demand that doesn't warrant the high costs of a casebound reprint at lower quantities (*Black Ice* or *Heart of the Blackhawk*s). If we win or are nominated for a big award then a paperback version is more cost-effective (*Waiting for the Man*).²

Sometimes ECW deems it appropriate to print a hardcover format and trade paperback format of a title simultaneously, with a simultaneous release date. This is done with few of their titles. If the company wishes to publish a book in both hardcover and paperback (to hit two distinct book-buying publics), both formats (each considered different editions with different ISBNs) will be printed and released simultaneously.³ This strategy is carried out for books that do extraordinarily well in the library market and also have a market that hits both the hardcover and paperback price points. For instance, the mystery novels *Verdict on Each Man Dead* (2015) and *Up in Smoke* (2013) were released in both hardcover and paperback simultaneously. These books will have the same trim size and the same typesetting. It is profitable to publish two physical formats with popular mystery books by known mystery authors because casebound copies are popular with the library and gift-giving markets and the paperback versions hit an audience with a lower price point. Additionally, fans of a mystery series who wish to collect hardcover copies of the entire series can do so and the lower priced paperbacks draw in readers who are just entering the series. Simultaneous two-format printing is not limited to mystery books however; ECW also used this strategy with *Death of WCW* (2014), a wrestling title, for similar reasons. By releasing two print formats at different price points, ECW believes that they can obtain the largest market (for appropriate titles).

2 Troy Cunningham, in discussion with the author, August 9, 2016.

3 Holmes, discussion.

However, this was not the plan for *Black Ice*. While ECW believed that there was enough of a market for the book that the book would financially break even, they did not plan on releasing two editions of the print book. Their initial plan was to put out a hardcover format of the title and see how the sales went from there. It was a possibility that the book would only ever exist in hardcover format, if sales and other indicating factors did not warrant the release of a trade paperback edition later on.

3.2 The First Release of *Black Ice*

The first release of this book was published in hardcover because the editorial team at ECW wanted to position the book as a culturally significant memoir. They wanted the format to enhance the gravity of the content. Many important hockey memoirs are published in hardcover for this reason: *Playing with Fire* by Theo Fleury (HarperCollins, 2009) and *Shift Work* by Tie Domi (Simon & Schuster, 2015). These two publishing houses are extremely large multinational corporations and offered large advances to their authors, which contributes to their decision to publish the first release in hardcover. By producing high-quality hardcover books with an accompanying higher profit-per-book, these large publishing houses earn their advance money back faster. Nevertheless, these books and many others have set the precedent that important hockey memoirs are published in hardcover, which influenced ECW's decision for the initial format of *Black Ice*.

On paper, it would have been more cost-effective to publish the initial release in trade paperback. Printing costs-per-unit would have been cheaper and trade paperbacks take up less space in storage. However, ECW Press's decision to print the book in hardcover was mainly about positioning the book and having it portray the significance of the story within. Another aspect a publishing house considers when deciding what format a book should be first released in is sales-per-format. A more expensive book will probably sell fewer copies than a cheaper book would be able to. But a cheaper paperback book brings the publisher less profit-per-book than a hardcover titles does. The publisher must determine or predict whether it would be more beneficial to release a hardcover and sell 2,000 copies or release a paperback and sell 4,000 copies. These scenarios are put into Profit and

Loss Statements and the publishing house must make their best educated guess on which road will be the most profitable. In *Black Ice's* case, ECW Press made an educated guess that it would be the most profitable and would benefit the title the most to initially publish in hardcover.

As stated in the previous section, the choice to publish the initial release of *Black Ice* in hardcover proved to be a good decision because it sold through 829 copies in Canadian and American major retailers in the first two months.⁴

There are several reasons why ECW made the decision to put out a trade paperback edition of the book two years after its initial release. Since the initial print run of 2,000 hardcover books in February 2015, ECW sold enough copies to warrant a 2,000 copy reprint of the hardcover version in March 2015. By early spring 2016, there was an inventory need to reprint more books, and the conversation started at ECW to decide which format to reprint in. As stated before, it is more cost-effective to reprint smaller print runs of a title in trade paperback than it is to do so in hardcover. While this conversation went on, ECW decided to reprint a small print run of 1,000 copies in April 2016 in hardcover, in order to give the company more time to put together a paperback edition. It was decided between March 9 and 22, 2016, to put together a trade paperback release of *Black Ice* scheduled for Spring 2017 (in addition to the 1,000 copy hardcover reprint of April 2016). This new edition would be a trade paperback, not a mass-market paperback, which did not change the cover price as drastically if it were to be released to the mass-market as a mass-market paperback. The hardcover format has a cover cost of \$24.95 CAD and the trade paperback format will have a price of \$19.95 CAD. This five dollar price difference will appeal to a new, small market of book-buyers, who do not wish to pay over \$20 for a book. In this, ECW differs from large publisher's windowing strategy. ECW did not plan for the trade paperback to come out several seasons after the hardcover in hopes of reaching a different market, as it has been previously stated, is a practice that many large publishers have been using since the hardcover revolution. A far more substantial reason why ECW wished to release a paperback edition of the book instead of reprinting in hardcover is that they

4 ECW Press Filemaker Pro Database. "BISS. Monthly Report." Internal database.

could make a few changes to the book and also that it was cheaper to reprint in paperback than in hardcover, as explained by production manager Troy Cunningham. However, ECW will attempt to reach a different market with the trade paperback edition by changing the cover, as will be discussed in a later section.

ECW decided to reprint a small number of hardcover copies, because the company wanted to make some changes to the manuscript (such as adding an afterword by James and changing the cover design) for the trade paperback release, but these changes were not yet ready. ECW opted to do a small reprint of the hardcover format because there was a pressing need for more inventory and wait until the changes were complete to release the trade paperback format of the book. Several indicating factors led ECW to make the decision to reprint in a different format, in hopes of obtaining more sales. The first sign was that media attention surrounding the book continued, which signaled that there was still interest in the book.

3.3 Indications to Release a Second Physical Format

A large indicating factor that a title is doing well and that the public is still interested in it if is the title receives any interest from film companies. If a film company has a desire to make the book into a movie, this tells the publishing house that the title is still relevant. In addition to this, a movie coming out based on a book generally leads to a bump in sales of the book. LeBron James's film company (SpringHill Entertainment) showed interest in buying life rights (to Val James's life story) in spring 2016, which indicated to ECW that Val James's story was still relevant and more copies of the book could be sold. Rumours and talk had circulated between the ECW office and LeBron James's representatives for a few months, and in May 2016 LeftField Entertainment (not LeBron James's company, but a film company that he supports) concluded a deal to secure film rights to Val James's life story. This deal was to last three months on the condition that the producer can demonstrate a commitment from a third party to produce a film.⁵ This was a sign to ECW that the book was still relevant and that the media still wanted to talk about the book.

⁵ David Caron, in discussion with the author, May 19, 2016.

In addition, *Soul on Ice: Past, Present & Future*, a documentary, and a Fox News Black History Month feature had both discussed Val James and his memoir publicly over the last months of 2015 and the early months of 2016. The media attention was a good signal to ECW that the book was still relevant and that there was a market for it. Another sign was the continuous sales of the book throughout North America: in November and December 2015, sell through of the book was 141 copies of the physical hardcover, and 150 copies of the hardcover were bought by consumers in January and February of 2016.⁶ All of these key indicating factors signaled to ECW that the title could benefit and obtain more sales from a new edition. In addition to these key signals, inventory had to be replenished; as previously stated, it is cheaper to reprint smaller print runs in trade paperback rather than in hardcover.

3.4 Changing the Cover

Another benefit of putting out a new trade paperback edition rather than just reprinting the hardcover format is that this new release attracts renewed attention to the book. It is again new (sometimes with a new cover) and exciting to booksellers. It was hoped that booksellers would take a new notice of the title because it would be fresh again with changes, and thus the book would get one more chance to be the exciting new item in the bookstore. The afterword written by James talks about all the media coverage the first edition of the book received and how it changed James's perspective on the significance of his story. The changed cover design allows the book to appeal to a new market.

While predictions of higher American market sales for the hardcover were proven to be true (total lifetime sell through: 1,295 sold in the US, 369 copies sold in Canada⁷), the sales team at ECW were told by booksellers that the book could have sold more copies in the US if the cover was different. The hardcover edition cover features a picture of James in a Toronto Maple Leafs jersey. It was several booksellers' opinions that the American market does not care too much for Canadian NHL teams, even if it is an American player playing for them.⁸ Unfortunate restrictions were on

6 ECW Press Filemaker Pro Database. "BISS. Monthly Report." Internal database.

7 Ibid.

8 Holmes, discussion.

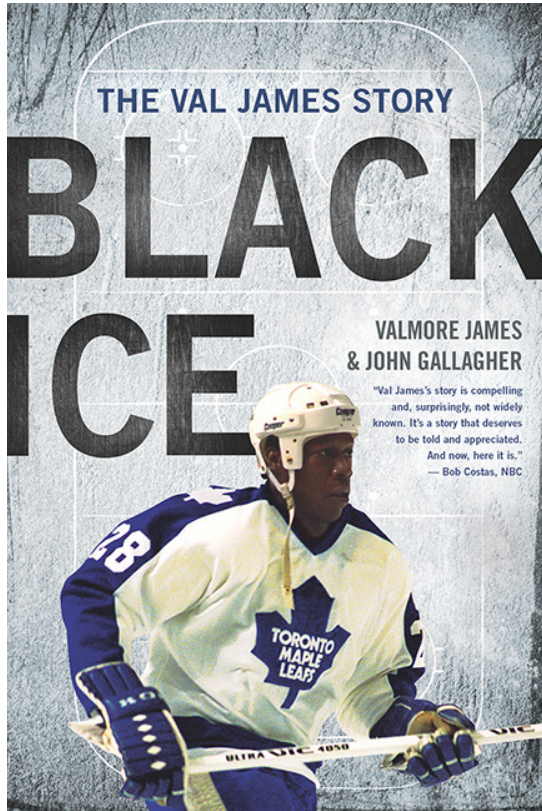


Figure 1. Hardcover front cover image.
(photo courtesy of ECW Press.)

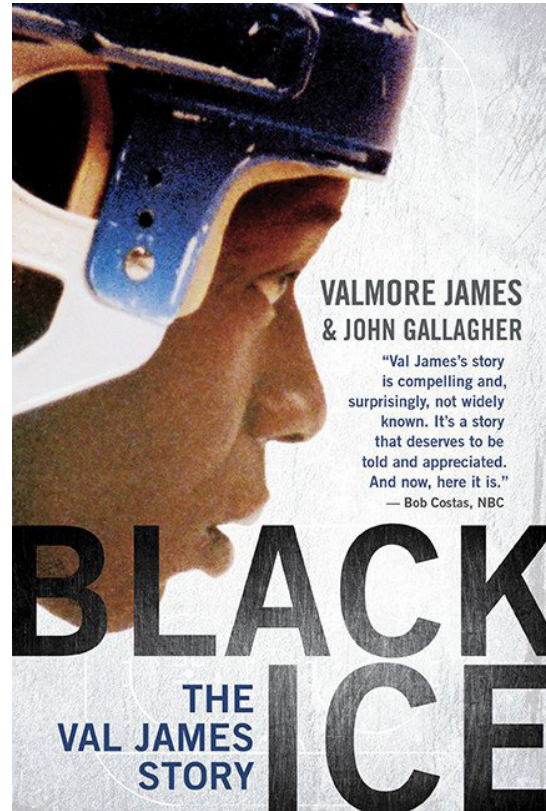


Figure 2. Trade paperback front cover image.
(photo courtesy of ECW Press.)

the different cover possibilities however: since James played professional hockey in the early 1980s, photographs of him playing are not of very high quality. He played a total of seven games for the Buffalo Sabres and, unfortunately, there is not a high-quality photograph of him playing in a Sabres jersey. This is a restriction of the decade that he played in; today, players that play even a single game in the NHL have several high-quality photographs taken of them. Even the photographs of James playing for the Rochester Americans are not very good quality and are not high resolution.

The decision was made to change the cover for the trade paperback edition, as an attempt to obtain even more sales in the US. The trade paperback cover design has a close up of James's face while he is on the ice and no team logos are visible. This is both an attempt to garner more sales in the American market and is an experiment to see how this change affects sales of the book.

3.5 Release Date

A title's release date can determine whether the book receives attention from the media and book-sellers or if it flies under the radar. The decision to release the hardcover format book during Black History Month was intentional. The sales and marketing team were hoping to attract publicity for the book by releasing it in February. ECW thought that this would give the book its best chance to get noticed and talked about if its release coincided with Black History Month (which is celebrated by both Canada and the US). As will be highlighted in the next section, this turned out to be true: it was the centre of a Fox News Black History Month feature, albeit one full year after its release. Directly after its release in 2015, the book was mostly covered by media in the context of Black History Month by newspapers. Both the book and James were mentioned in a documentary on Black professional hockey players (*Soul on Ice: Past, Present & Future*) released in October 2015. James's story was also picked up by Fox News for Black History Month in 2016.

Choosing a release date directs the books towards a certain market of book buyers. This book was not directed towards the large, hockey-book buying audience. Hockey books for a more general audience are usually released in the fall season, in time for Christmas gift buying. ECW chose an audience for this book of older hockey fans and people interested in and concerned with Black rights issues, which meant that a release during Black History Month was appropriate.

When deciding which format to publish a new title in, ECW Press primarily considers which format would best suit the content. There are several indicating factors that they keep track of while the first edition sells, primarily the media attention surrounding it and inventory count. Then, taking into consideration reprint costs and whether or not the company wishes to make any changes to the book, ECW Press discusses strategically whether or not it will be profitable to release a second physical format of a book as a new edition, commonly a trade paperback reprint of a previously released hardcover.

Chapter 4: Promotional Planning for a Paperback

4.1 Publicity Strategy at ECW

According to Lorimer, “[t]he job of the publicist is to gain media attention for the book and its author beyond the attention being purchased by marketers.”¹ Publicity is supplementary to and explicitly different from marketing, which “overlaps with production in that such elements as cover design and cover copy serve the dual purpose of presenting and marketing the book The marketing department will set a book’s release date; decide how to present it in a catalogue; work with the cover designer to make the book stand out in a particular section of a bookstore; circulate review copies; and work with the publicity department, which carries out a specialized extension of marketing.”² In the case of ECW, it is generally the publicity department who distribute review and advance review copies.

Black Ice is an excellent example of a two-format book released by a mid-sized publisher. Sarah Dunn, the publicist for this book at ECW Press, explains that publicity for this title was never planned to be a two-parter.³ ECW planned on releasing the hardcover format of the book and watching how sales went to determine whether or not a second physical edition would be released; so the publicity team for this book did everything they could to make the first release succeed.

Publicizing titles has become increasingly difficult in 2016 because of the amount of noise clogging traditional media. Today, almost every large city newspaper has a book review section, large talk radio stations have book review shows (which are later released as podcast episodes), as well as video book bloggers and book bloggers in general. With these shrinking windows, marketing managers (and publicists) have changed their tactics from marketing to the masses (with large newspaper advertisements) to marketing to small groups with specific interests.⁴

1 Lorimer, *Ultra Libris*, 24.

2 Ibid.

3 Dunn, discussion.

4 Thompson, *Merchants of Culture*, 246.

Publicity at ECW usually follows the same process: identify the market, then target the influencers and media for that market. For *Black Ice*, the market identified for this book was hockey fans, sports history fans, the Black community, and the cities James had played professionally in (Toronto, Buffalo, Rochester, and Erie). The media for each of these markets were each targeted: advance review copies of the book were sent to hockey media contacts (NHL.com, hockey bloggers), general sports history magazines and bloggers, Black media, Toronto newspapers, Buffalo newspapers, Rochester newspapers, and Erie newspapers, as well as to each of the teams that James played for in these cities.

4.2 Media Coverage and Sales

The week that *Black Ice* was released, *The New York Times* (circ. 2,149,012) printed an interview with James, including a feature of the book (February 3, 2015).⁵ Dunn attributes this high profile interview for the multitude of media attention that came afterwards. This article was reprinted in the *Waterloo Region Record* (circ. 63,386) on February 5, 2015, the *Atlanta Black Star* (136,390 unique visitors/month) on February 5, 2015, and *The Globe and Mail* (circ. 416,408), also on February 5, 2015. This was the first high profile media piece about the book and it set everything else in motion. In publicity, the strategy can sometimes be to get one really big piece and then other media outlets will follow. Of course, a lot of books do not make it into *The New York Times*; *Black Ice* was mentioned in the newspaper because Dunn contacted the right media people and because it is a very special book. This article came to be because Dunn contacted high profile newspaper and blogger contacts with news of this book coming out and the word continued to spread through various media facets until a freelancer for *The New York Times*, Pat Borzi, heard of it and decided to write an article about it.

The New York Times article set in motion traditional media coverage in the *Rochester Democrat and Chronicle* (circ. 94,103) and the *Rochester Business Journal* (circ. 9,915). Several different kinds of media covered this story: from newspapers to podcasts to news broadcasts. Popular magazine and media group *Vice* (28, 273 unique visitors/month) requested an interview with James that was printed in

⁵ Pat Borzi, "Val James, First U.S.-Born Black Player In N.H.L., Publishes Autobiography," *The New York Times*, February 3, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/04/sports/hockey/val-james-first-us-born-black-player-in-nhl-publishes-autobiography.html?_r=0.

Vice Sports on February 8, 2014.⁶ Prominent newspapers from around the continent wrote articles on James and his memoir, including *Newsday*, *Los Angeles Times*, and *The Buffalo News*. Much of the newspaper media attention this book received was around New York state.

Publicist Dunn also arranged for James to appear in radio interviews on National Public Radio, SiriusXM's NHL Network, *The Jeff McArthur Show* on AM 640, and *Canada AM* during February and March of 2015. James appeared on television and in video interviews on ESPN.com and on NHL Network's *NHL Live*. He was a guest on several podcasts, including Sportsnet's *Marek vs. Wyshynski*,⁷ and *Slapshot Radio*.⁸ In addition to newspapers, several prominent hockey blogs also featured the book, including *Puck Junk*⁹ and *Hockey Book Reviews*.¹⁰

In addition to the traditional media attention, Dunn found a partner in James's co-writer. John Gallagher knew that the Rochester Americans (in partnership with Seneca Casinos) had a history of throwing events for their past high-profile players. For example, Seneca Casinos Legends Nights had previously honoured Joe Crozier.¹¹ Gallagher approached the Amerks (the common nickname for the Rochester Americans) about throwing an event for James, in recognition of all he had done for them during his career, and Val James Legends Night was created. On February 13, 2015, an honorary event for James was thrown at the Rochester Americans' arena, the Blue Cross Arena at War Memorial.¹² James signed autographs prior to the Rochester Americans' game that day (versus the Adirondack Flames) and the Amerks team store at the arena sold the book that evening. In addition to signing autographs, James did a ceremonial puck drop at the beginning of the game and shook hands with season ticket holders.

This resulted in a rush of local Rochester-Buffalo area media writing about James and the new book.

6 Smriti Sinha, "No One Was Tougher": The Story Of The NHL's First Black American," *VICE Sports*, February 3, 2015, https://sports.vice.com/en_us/article/no-one-was-tougher-the-story-of-the-nhls-first-black-american.

7 Val James, "Marek Vs Wyshynski," *SN 590 The Fan*, Sportsnet. Podcast.

8 Val James, "Slapshot Radio," *The Game Nashville*, Podcast.

9 Sal Barry, "Book Review: Black Ice: The Val James Story." *Puck Junk* (blog). May 13, 2015. <http://puckjunk.com/2015/05/13/book-review-black-ice-the-val-james-story/>

10 Joe Pelletier, "Black Ice: The Val James Story." *Hockey Book Reviews*. <http://www.hockeybookreviews.com/2015/01/black-ice-val-james-story.html>

11 Rochester Americans, 2012. "AHL Hall Of Famer Joe Crozier To Attend Seneca Casinos Legends Night." Press Release.

12 William Douglas, "'Soul on Ice' Documentary debuts Wednesday on NHL Network," *The Color of Hockey* (blog). February 23, 2016, <https://colorofhockey.com/2016/02/23/soul-on-ice-documentary-debuts-wednesday-on-nhl-network/>

James met with *Soul on Ice: Past, Present & Future* (a documentary on Black hockey players, released October 2015) director Damon Kwame Mason about the documentary and gave Mason stories from his time in the NHL. Among other prominent Black ice hockey players, the documentary discusses PK Subban, Georges Laraque and Val James, and follows prospect Jaden Lindo and his family during his draft year. Mason made this documentary because he finds that in Canada, society likes to pretend that racism doesn't exist and that Canada is "too nice" for racism. Mason found that to be very untrue when he played ice hockey growing up and this documentary shows how untrue that stereotype is for these NHL players.¹³ While this documentary does not feature James nor *Black Ice*, it talks about Black professional hockey players, which indirectly publicizes the book.

As can be seen from this extensive coverage list, the first release of *Black Ice* received a lot of media attention in the Buffalo and Rochester area. However, the amount of publicity attention did not directly correlate to a large amount of sales. 784 physical copies were sold in America between February 1, 2015, and September 1, 2015. 254 were sold in Canada between these dates.¹⁴ Even though the circulation numbers of some of the newspapers James received publicity from are in the hundreds of thousands, this goes to show that amount of publicity does not directly correlate to amount of sales.

4.3 Publicity Challenges

Sarah Dunn ran into several challenges during the publicity of this first release. Publicity with a new author is always a gamble because the company does not have a prior relationship with the author. For example, for the first release of *Black Ice* in 2015, James didn't have email, he worked nights so he wasn't available for a lot of events or other promotional activities, and he didn't have a social media presence. This left a lot of ground work to be done by ECW Press's publicity department.

13 Matt Larkin, "How Documentary 'Soul On Ice' Redefines What It Means To Be Black In Hockey." *The Hockey News*, October 9, 2015. <http://www.thehockeynews.com/blog/how-documentary-soul-on-ice-redefines-what-it-means-to-be-black-in-hockey/>.

14 ECW Press Filemaker Pro Database. "BISS. Monthly Report." Internal database.

Setting up live interviews is more difficult than setting up interviews for print because larger networks require publicists to prove that the interviewee can speak well while being recorded. This can be difficult for first-time authors because there are not any existing interview videos that a publicist can point to as proof of their interviewing ability. While James had been a professional hockey player in the 1980s and had given interviews during that time, it was too long ago to use those as proof of how well he could interact during an interview. Usually, it is easier to convince interviewers that they should interview a candidate if the publicist has a video or recording of a prior interview the candidate took part in, in order to prove that they can do so well. For the release of the second edition, Dunn is able to prove that James is a great interviewee because there has been so much coverage on him. This will make it faster and easier to obtain interviews for him. With this release, ECW has recordings of his interviews, and therefore Dunn will be able to send those recordings to larger television and radio networks and obtain more coverage from large networks, networks that are around the same size as Fox News.

Even though he was a first-time author, interest in James and his story persisted one full year after the release of *Black Ice* (the first edition). James was featured on Fox News Black History Month series in February 2016.¹⁵ Initially, the release of this title was set during Black History Month in hopes that it would be covered by both television and newspaper media for Black History Month in 2015. Even though only newspapers covered the story during Black History Month in 2015, a producer for Fox News contacted Dunn in October 2015 to plan out and set up feature to be shown during Black History Month in 2016. In the month following this feature, *Black Ice* sold 109 physical copies across North America, compared to the 23 copies sold in the month prior to the feature.¹⁶ Black History Month coverage influenced more sales, which was also a factor in deciding to release a trade paperback edition of the book. Dunn wanted to obtain more coverage from Black activists and media with the paperback release. Although the book was written about on *The Colour of Hockey* blog, in the *Atlanta Black Star*, and James was mentioned in the *Soul on Ice* documentary, Dunn believes

15 Val James, interview by Fox News, *Fox News Black History Month*. February 2016. Broadcast.

16 ECW Press Filemaker Pro Database. "BISS. Monthly Report." Internal database.

that there is potential for more coverage in Black sports and activism media. She thinks that this is an important racial issues book that contributes to the discussion of the struggles that Black athletes face, not only in hockey but in other sports, and to the greater context of discrimination issues. She intends to reach media contacts who discuss these issues prior to the release of the trade paperback.

4.4 ECW's Publicity Strategy for a Second Edition

Dunn likes to think of the second release of a book as a second chance at publicity;¹⁷ she can try to obtain all the coverage that she was not able to get last time. Her strategy in publicizing the second edition release of a book starts with analyzing what kinds of media coverage the first edition received. For the cities that James had played professionally in, the book received a lot of attention in Rochester and Buffalo areas, but not as much attention in Toronto or Erie. Therefore, for the second edition, Dunn plans to target the media outlets in Toronto and Erie and reach out to the teams James played for in those cities. Fox News was the only television media outlet to put out a Black History Month feature on James, so Dunn will push for more coverage from Fox News (the paperback edition is also coming out prior to Black History Month in 2017) and other news stations. James received a large amount of coverage on radio and podcasts, but Dunn will reach out to those contacts again and specifically target ones in the Toronto and Erie areas. The main focus will be large newspapers in Toronto (for example, the *Toronto Star*) and the Erie Blades organization. Dunn will use her media contacts within the Toronto Maple Leafs organization to promote the book and see if the Leafs would like to help advertise the book or honour James in any way. After all, Dunn has a good pitch for them: James was the first Black NHL player to skate for the Toronto Maple Leafs. There is potential to do a marketing-partnership with the Leafs for a game or an event, especially since 2017 is the 100-year anniversary of the Toronto Maple Leafs and they are planning many organization celebrations during the season.

There was communication with the Erie Blades in 2015 to set up an event for James, much like the event the Rochester Americans held for James. Unfortunately, the timing and planning did

¹⁷ Dunn, discussion.

not work out for that event to occur. The second edition gives ECW another chance to discuss and coordinate with the Erie Blades and try to set up an event honouring James and promoting the book.

TSN had wanted to set up an interview with James in the spring of 2015 but scheduling with other interviews and coverage did not allow that to happen. The trade paperback edition gives Dunn another opportunity to approach TSN and reschedule interviews and coverage across their many platforms.

For the first edition, Dunn sent out a publicity letter to all the contacts she identified, introducing the book and James, and stated that anyone wanting an advance review copy of the book could contact her and she would send them one. For the second edition, there won't be any advance review copies because one format of the book has already been released. Dunn will send out another publicity letter, and if any media would like a copy of the book, Dunn will send them a complimentary copy of either the hardcover edition or ebook, whichever is their preference.

Dunn received much high-profile media coverage for *Black Ice's* first release, but her job isn't complete yet. She must try to obtain more coverage and coverage from different outlets for the trade paperback reprint. She has the opportunity to recontact media that did not schedually work out the first time and to find new media contacts. Dunn has the ability and opportunity to find new audiences for the second edition of this book.

Conclusion

Mid-sized independent Canadian publishers have many more considerations than large-sized publishers to worry about when choosing the initial physical format to publish a book in. Generally, they will not sell 10,000 copies of a book in the first year and therefore have more cash-flow considerations than large publishers. They do not usually offer large advances to their authors, so they do not have to consider attempting to make their money back through the higher profits-per-book of hardcover books. Unless the title is part of a successful mystery series, ECW Press does not usually plan on producing hardcover and trade paperback editions of the same book. All decisions regarding subsequent reprintings in trade paperback (if a title was originally published in hardcover) depend on sales numbers, sustained media attention, and whether or not the reprint will have additional matter added to it, such as an afterword or a new cover. Many of ECW's titles exist only in one print format and digitally.

ECW Press has a standard publishing method regarding trade paperback reprints of previously published hardcovers: they keep track of several indicating factors that signal to them whether or not the release of a different physical format of a title will be profitable or not. They look at whether media attention is still surrounding the book, they look at if there were any sales held back because of the cover design and if there is an alternative cover design they would like to try, and they take an educated guess on whether or not book sellers will pay attention to the book if a new edition is released. A title being shortlisted for winning an award is also a factor, because reprints of smaller print runs are cheaper if done in trade paperback rather than in hardcover.

Publicizing the second print edition of a book begins with analyzing the publicity attempts made with the first release that didn't quite work, and going after these media outlets again with a new angle. Publicists take a close look at the market audiences they targeted the first time (also contemplating if they missed any or if any new avenues have surfaced) and seeing which ones they were not able to reach as fully as they would have liked. Sometimes timing for interviews or features does work out, so the release of a second format allows another chance to schedule these interviews.

For first-time authors, the release of a second edition gives them an advantage, almost akin to putting out a second book. They have a media platform already built for them and there should be recordings of their television and radio interviews. These recorded interviews allow for better coverage on larger media networks, because the publicist can provide proof that the author is a good interviewee.

Mid-sized publishing houses like ECW Press are coordinated by their size and resources. They have to be careful with both their monetary and staff resources and allocate these resources strategically according to their publishing method. As studied in this report, ECW Press does not print all of their lead titles in hardcover and only plan on releasing a few of their books in both hardcover and trade paperback editions from the acquisitions stage. They make their decisions based on whether or not the release of a subsequent physical format will be profitable according to key indicating factors: media attention, continuous sales of the first physical format and digital sales, and whether or not additions can be made to the title to gain booksellers' attention. The release of a second edition physical format of a title at a later date gives the publicity department another crack at the whip in regards to the media they reached with the first release. A new edition allows them to recontact media outlets, find new ones, and remedy publicity attempts that did not work out the first time. For first-time authors, they have evidence of good interviews that can help them receive attention from larger media outlets and all of this allows the media attention ball to keep on rolling, and thus, make the second physical format of a title profitable.

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