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Prepping for a Radio Interview

You write a novel ... and the next thing you know, you're doing radio interviews.

Okay, it doesn't happen quite that fast. But when you're sitting at home, waiting to go live on a radio interview, you can find yourself thinking, "They don't talk about talking about your novel on the radio too often at writers conferences."

We attend workshops about developing our characters. Our settings. Characters' dialogue. How to pitch to editors and agents.

Radio interviews? Not so much.

To be honest, it's more difficult for a novelist to land a radio interview nowadays – or so I've been told by folks in the know. But it does happen, so you need to be prepared. Here are some helpful tips for a good radio interview:

1. Don't reinvent the wheel. Utilize your Author Q&A developed by your publisher's marketing department for your book release. Your media package, including the Q&A, should have been sent to the radio station, along with a copy of your book. The interviewer may or may not use some of the questions, but it helps to be prepared. Read over the questions and your answers, just in case. This is about being comfortable, not memorization – and keep a copy nearby during the interview.

2. Remember it's not just about you. You'll most likely be sent advanced information about the upcoming interview: day, time, whether you call into the station or they call you, if you're using a landline or cell phone, and also a link to the radio program. That link? It's gold! Use it to:

a. listen to at least a partial segment of the program to introduce yourself to your interviewer's personality.

b. read your interviewer's bio. You often find something that helps you connect with the interviewer on a personal level when you first say hello or during an advertising break.

c. Assume nothing. Your interviewer may have read your book – or not. They may go straight through your Author Q&A – or pick a theme from your book and go with that. A recent hour-long interview for *Things I Never Told You*, which centers on a secret one

sister has kept from her family for 10 years, focused on the question, “What can’t you talk to your sister about?” After one interviewer continually referred to specific pages in my novel whenever he asked questions, I always keep a copy of my book nearby.

*d. **Brief is always better.*** We’re writers – we know how words count – and it’s true for radio interview too.

e. Keep your intros brief. “I’ve been looking forward to talking with you” always works.

f. Keep your answers to questions brief too. Respond. Let the interviewer react/reply and ask another question.

g. Repeat the title of your book and your website – especially if your interviewer doesn’t – but don’t spam the interview.

h. Be ready with a brief closing statement – a “what would you like our listeners to know” answer, which is often asked at the end of an interview.