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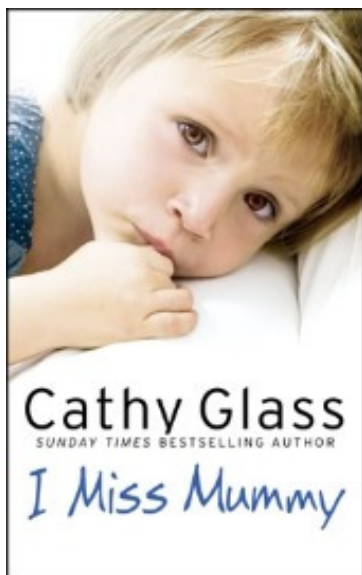
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Pitching An Agent: Andrew Lownie Literary Agency

This agency seeks well-researched nonfiction that's quirky and commercial

By Jeff Rivera – February 8, 2011



Number of agents: One

Number of clients: 130

Notable clients: Juliet Barker, Joyce Cary Estate, Roger Crowley, David Day, Laurence Gardner, Robert Hutchinson, Christopher Lloyd

Amount of unsolicited material selected: One percent

Fiction vs. Nonfiction: 80 percent nonfiction, 20 percent fiction

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Background: Born in Kenya and educated in Scotland and North Carolina, literary agent Andrew Lownie studied at Cambridge and Edinburgh University before a chance meeting with John Le Carre in 1984 introduced him to the world of publishing. He later spent time as a bookseller, journalist, and an editor before finally forming his own literary agency in 1988. Lownie is also the author of several books, including a literary companion to Edinburgh, a life of the writer John Buchan, and a forthcoming biography of the spy Guy Burgess. A former literary agent to the charity English PEN, Lownie sits on the Board of BIO (Biographers International Organization) and also founded the Biographer's Club, a networking organization of which he is now president, in 1997.

Lownie prides himself on personally handling new material himself, rather than delegating them to an assistant or junior agent. "Many authors have been with the agency for over twenty years or since their first book," Lownie says. Although his agency represents a large volume of authors, because his clients are at different stages of development with their projects, he is able to juggle projects seamlessly without his authors feeling left out. Being an author himself, he knows the importance of that personal attention.

What to pitch: The agency specializes in nonfiction, especially history, memoir, biography, celebrity and investigative books, but is always open to anything quirky and commercial.

Potential clients should be able to present themselves professionally (both in person and on an author website), and have a book that is well-researched. Lownie also looks for authors who have something new and different to add to the world and possess a natural knack for marketing.

He describes the perfect client as "an author who has some sort of platform or profile and can write fluently." Take as much, if not more, time in building your platform as you have in completing your work. Lownie says he is willing to make exceptions, but the writing must be strong enough to support it.

What not to pitch: Children's and YA, romance, science fiction, fantasy, screenplays, poetry, short stories, religion, academic, self-help, philosophy and business.

You may laugh at Lownie's description of a potential client from hell, but his comments are based on real experience and real submissions. "Any prospective author who rings me up from Australia asking me to return their call simply giving their name, who writes in green ink, or who doesn't supply details to contact them is not

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what I'm looking for," he says. "There has to be mutual trust and respect between author and agent and, obvious as it seems, they have to be able to work together."

Recent sales: *Making Waves* by David Hasselhoff to Hodder and St. Martin's Press; *Born on a Blue Day* and *Embracing the Wide Sky* by Daniel Tammet to Hodder and Simon & Schuster; *Antarctica: A Biography* by David Day to Random House Australia; and *I Miss Mummy* the sixth top ten bestseller by Cathy Glass to Harper Collins.

Contract: 15 percent domestic & foreign

Etiquette: Submit your query via email, but review the website for the agency's latest submission guidelines.

Contact info:

Andrew Lownie Literary Agency
36 Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BU
www.andrewlownie.co.uk

Direct all queries to: LOWNIE at GLOBALNET dot CO dot UK

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Jeff Rivera is the author of *Forever My Lady (Grand Central)* and and the Founder of HowtoWriteaQueryLetter.com

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