

By Larry W. Timm

Proposed title: “Why did I push Send?”

My left index finger retreats from the keypad. I take a few breaths into the paper sack held in my quivering right hand, then stare at the taunting words—*Your message has been sent*. “What did I just do?” I feel vulnerable.

I just pushed Send.

My book proposal is traveling toward an agent’s in-box. And I can’t stop it. Images of the Hindenburg drift across my mind. “Whuaduna?” I remove the paper sack from my face and ask again, “What do I do now?”

My palms are sweaty but my mouth is dry. And I’m talking to myself. I gaze at the front door, certain the FBI will soon be sledgehammering through and arresting me for impersonating a writer. Oh, my poor family. I imagine the street lined with news crews, and yellow crime tape flapping in the breeze. I visualize myself in orange. *I hate flip-flops*. “Is it hot in here?”

It can’t be long before Oprah comes out of retirement and has my wife sitting on the couch next to her. She’ll turn to my wife. “Have you heard from the big imposter since he’s been sentenced to life without publishing?”

“No...” My wife will dab her eyes with a crumpled tissue. “They won’t let him write.”

Oooof course not.

Shame stares me in the face...and it has bad breath. I quickly discard the paper sack.

How could I send such garbage to an agent? “Why didn’t anyone stop me?” I moan. *Did I undangle all the participles? Catch all the floating body parts?* The agent will read it and laugh...in the wrong places. Suddenly I feel like I’m back in second grade, waiting for the teacher to decide between my picture of the purple stick elephant and little Johnny’s dumb sunset painting. How many times do you see purple stick elephants? Sunsets are so daily!

“I’m glad I sent my story out.” I bang my head on the table. “But why did I send THAT story?”