

# John Gilstrap, New York Times Best-Selling Author, on the Paperback Battle: Mass Market vs Trade and What's Next

*As publishing evolves, John Gilstrap says that physical books continue to hold lasting value.*

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 7, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the publishing world undergoes a major evolution, from audiobooks to the closing of independent bookstores, New York Times bestselling author [John Gilstrap](#) is weighing in on one of the most significant industry shifts in recent years: the gradual decline of mass-market paperbacks in favor of trade paperback editions.

To purchase copies of Gilstrap's thrilling masterpieces, including [Burned Brides](#), click here: <https://www.kensingtonbooks.com/author/john-gilstrap/>

"Mass market paperbacks were designed for portability and accessibility," explains Gilstrap. "They were easy to grab and affordable for readers, but the industry is moving toward trade paperbacks, which are larger, more durable, and visually more appealing, but also more expensive."

A prolific thriller writer known for his pulse-pounding storytelling, Gilstrap has long had his books published in mass market format, a



John Gilstrap

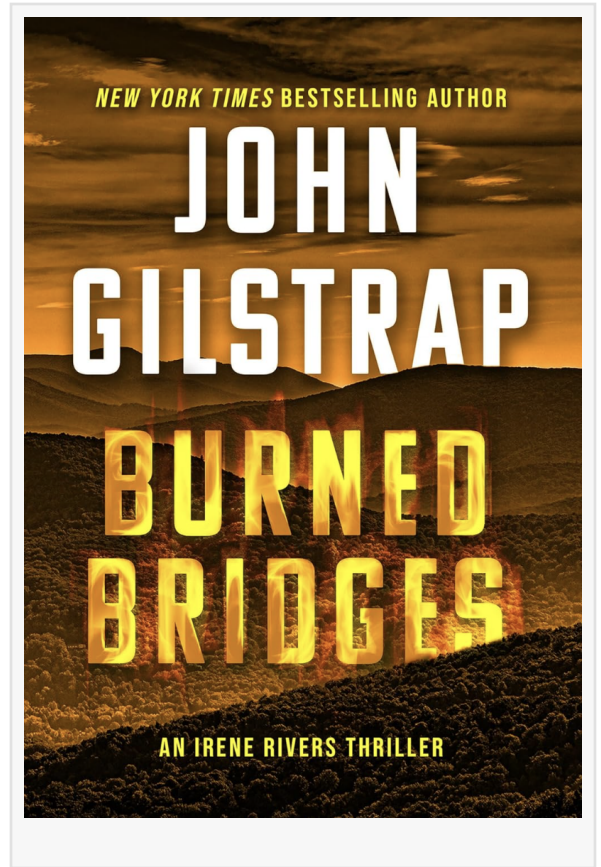


Mass Market Paper Back vs. Trade Paper Back. Photo Credit: Megan Johnson, Hey!mReading.com

smaller, more affordable version of the paperback that once filled airport kiosks, supermarket shelves, and bookstore spinner racks. But today, that model is changing.

“There are many authors, myself included, who have built successful careers through mass market paperbacks,” explains Gilstrap. “Having physical books on shelves still matters, because the way readers engage with a story can be deeply influenced by the format in which they experience it.”

The shift, Gilstrap says, mirrors broader transformations in how readers consume books. With the rise of digital tablets, e-readers, and audiobooks, many traditional venues for book discovery, such as independent bookstores, which were once thriving community pillars, have largely disappeared. [Statistics](#) show that over the past 20 years, independent bookstores in the U.S. have seen major changes. From a peak of 5,500 stores in 1995, numbers fell sharply to about 1,400 by 2009, driven by the rise of online retailers like Amazon and the effects of the Great Recession.



But Gilstrap doesn't view these changes with gloom.

“Some of this is nostalgia,” Gilstrap says. “When I was a child, I remember family reading time. And we actually discussed books. Now everyone is looking at their tablets. Together time is all that matters, but I think it's important for families to still engage and be present with each other.”

Still, he sees opportunity and even optimism in this evolution. Trade paperbacks are more likely to be showcased in retail displays, more attractive to gift buyers, and often feature enhanced cover designs and bonus content, adding value for the modern reader. Audiobooks, meanwhile, have opened literature to multitaskers and people with visual impairments or reading difficulties.

Gilstrap believes these changes could reignite a love of storytelling, especially if families adapt to the industry's changes.

“As families evolve, so should our commitment to nurturing young minds through reading. Whether it's a hardback, trade paperback, e-book, or audiobook, the format matters less than the habit itself.”

Gilstrap is hopeful that a future generation of readers will continue to find joy in stories, no matter how they're delivered. As he puts it, "The book industry isn't dying, it's transforming. And transformation brings opportunity," he concludes.

#### About John Gilstrap

John Gilstrap is the New York Times bestselling author of the Jonathan Grave thriller series, including Harm's Way, Hellfire, and Scorpion Strike. A former firefighter and explosives safety expert, his writing combines real-world grit with breakneck suspense. Gilstrap's novels have earned him acclaim from critics and readers alike. He is a frequent speaker on writing, publishing, and the power of storytelling in a changing world.

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