



2022 CAPABILITIES DECK

THELITERARYLOBBYIST.COM



Dawn Michelle Hardy

Championing for authors since 2002.

Publicist. Agent. Consultant. Enthusiast. Advocate. Speaker.

Dawn Michelle Hardy, "**The Literary Lobbyist**," is a creative publicity strategist and staunch advocate for self-published and traditionally published authors. She works closely with literary agents, editors, sales and publicity representatives, and publishers to conceptualize, execute, and track marketing campaigns' success.

For twenty years, Dawn has developed and facilitated multimedia publicity campaigns that drive sales, create fan bases, land lucrative multibook deals, garner book awards and industry honors, that helped leverage the author's success for on-screen opportunities, corporate sponsorships and paid speaking engagements.

**90% of clients for the past 20 years
are direct or online referrals.**

10 consecutive years in creating and facilitating publicity campaigns that have garnered awards and industry honors for debut authors in poetry, children's books, women's fiction, nonfiction sports, and business.



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SERVICE OVERVIEW

A bility and proven track record in developing a self-published or traditionally published book from the initial planning and strategy stages through publication and campaign execution.

Essential services include but are not limited to:

- Award submissions
- Pre-publication endorsements
- Bylines and author profiles
- Podcast tours
- Book roundups
- Trade reviews and features
- Media author interviews
- Social media campaign management
- Virtual and IRL book events and tours
- Marketing partnerships with lifestyle and tech brands, independent and traditional bookstores



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OVERVIEW

In December 2020, *The New York Times* published an op-ed piece, revealing that only 11 percent of the books published in 2018 were written by people of color, with an even smaller percentage by black authors. Although diversity in publishing is slowly integrating the predominantly white industry, the multifaceted stories and voices of the black community remain peripheral, leaving many talented black authors underrepresented, or relatively unknown.

Dawn Michelle Hardy, widely known as The Literary Lobbyist, is a book publicist, literary agent and most aptly, a staunch supporter for independent authors, particularly novice black authors. Hardy has been advocating for black writers since her start in working as the assistant to now *New York Times* best-selling author, Teri Woods (**"True to the Game"**).

Hardy insists the major roadblock in BIPOC debut authors finding high level success is not in the quality of content but the lack of a well-executed target marketing campaigns that they receive.

The approach taken by The Literary Lobbyist to get books into the hands of readers is often driven by grassroots community engagement in a budget-conscious, creative and pragmatic way.

"I have never witnessed any book receive such a connective and fluid plug as the media blitz produced by The Literary Lobbyist for this novel. For three days, the solidarity among a reading community was visible. It was awesome witnessing post after post celebrating the book and the author", said Donna Johnson, about the Instagram blitz for the debut self-published novel, **"Black Girls Must Die Exhausted"** by Jayne Allen.

In her roles as literary agent and book publicist, Hardy, a visionary, can see the end from the start. "[Dawn] had a vision for this project long before I was able to see it," said Kent Babb, author of **"Not a Game: The Incredible Rise and Unthinkable Fall of Allen Iverson"** (Simon & Schuster, 2015). "She read my *Washington Post* profile on Iverson in April 2013 and just refused to let me say no to her about expanding the story into a book."

As a creative strategist, Hardy believes for readers to buy and review a book, they first need to discover it. She starts generating publicity by granting readers early access to the author during the book's pre-order season. Curating an inclusive community experience between the author and their reader helps create buzz-worthy book releases. She follows the lead-in approach by using multiple platforms including partnering with social and professional groups, social media, community cover reveals, on-screen interviews and radio tours and podcasts to execute a successful launch.

Hardy's advocacy, innovation and proven track record have made her one of the most sought-after book publicists for debut writers of color.



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SELECT FEATURES & PLACEMENTS

EXPLORE **Parents.**

Mentors for Young Boys May Be the Answer to Countering Toxic Masculinity

While we continue to empower young girls, we may be leaving boys behind. But research shows they are taking their own lives and committing crimes at higher rates. Mentorship may be the help they need.

By Christine Michel Carter March 10, 2020

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POWER: The New Faces of Civil Rights



Kerry Washington
Hollywood's Her Black and

Survival Mode
AFTER A YEAR OF CHALLENGING PATTERNS

Black Sands Entertainment Focuses on Books, Comics for Black Families

Black Publishing
By Christine Michel Carter 10/10/20



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'Get Over 'I Got It': How to Stop Playing Superwoman, Get Support, and Remember That Having It All Doesn't Mean Doing It All Alone' by Elayne Fluker

Elayne Fluker has been riding for women's empowerment since her days as an editor at some of our favorite publications, from *Martha Stewart Living* and *Conde Nast Digital* to *Essence* and *Vibe*. Now as founder and CEO of Chic Rebellion Media, where she hosts the *Support is Sexy* podcast, highlighting the stories of *women entrepreneurs*, she continues *building her own legacy*. Her latest book gets into the nitty-gritty of the isolating *superwoman complex* many of us struggle with and digs into how to build strong networks of support for long-term success.

\$17.99

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EBONY NEWS & POLITICS ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT CULTURE & BLACK LIFE VIDEOS EVENTS

CAREERS & FINANCE, COOL JOBS


[COOL JOBS] Dawn Michelle Hardy: The Literary Lobbyist

BY STEPHEN SPINER
JANUARY 16, 2019

f t i in



SHADOW AND ACT FILM



PHOTOGRAPH BY J. J.


Executive Producer Tressa Azarel Smallwood On Her Unconventional Journey Into The Film Industry

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Beauty CEO and Two-Time Breast Cancer Survivor Chris-Tia Donaldson on Self-Love

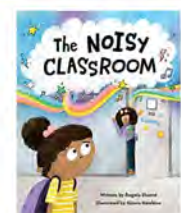
The founder of Thank God It's Natural talks about her turning point and being an advocate.

By Elayne Fluker 10/10/20



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Book Riot AUDIOBOOKS CHILDREN'S COMICS MYSTERY/THRILLER NONFICTION ROMANCE



THE NOISY CLASSROOM BY ANGELA SHANTÉ AND ALISON HAWKINS

This is my daughter's favorite book despite the fact she isn't in school yet. This is a great early reader book that even younger kids will be captivated by. Every page is inviting and colorful. You follow a soon-to-be 3rd grader who is scheduled to be in Ms. Johnson's class—the noisy classroom. Ms. Johnson is always singing and playing music with the students, so they can't possibly be learning, right? I love that this book helps younger kids navigate their anxiety with the new

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Get Over “I Got It”: How to Stop Playing Superwoman, Get Support & Remember That Having it All Doesn’t Mean Doing it All Alone

by **Elayne Fluker**

(HarperCollins Leadership, 2021) *COVID-19

STARTING POINT: Elayne Fluker writer, editor, producer, and media entrepreneur has served as an editorial executive at media powerhouses such as *Condé Nast*, *Huffington Post*, *Essence*, *Martha Stewart Living*, *VIBE*, and *Latina* was preparing to launch her debut book with HarperCollins Leadership.

As the host of *Support is Sexy* podcast Elayne has interviewed over 500 diverse women entrepreneurs from around the world, on a range of career moments including how they started, how they stumbled and how having the courage to ask for support along the way played a pivot part in their success.

CHALLENGE: Despite Elayne’s platform, her debut book was scheduled for publication May 2021 during the COVID-19 global pandemic. Harper Leadership provided marketing initiatives but was not staffed for publicity outreach. We would have to rely on a completely digital campaign for a first time author.

SOLUTION: The Literary Lobbyist began seven months before publication to support Elayne in planning and managing her relationship resources. The pandemic proved to be an ideal time to speak to working women about asking for the support needed to find success in all areas of their lives.

Starting early allowed us to maximize the pre-publication season with a podcast promo tour. The podcast tour consisted of over 10 bookings including guest appearances on *Emerging Women*, *Entrepreneur on Fire* and *ProjectHR*. We began full media outreach during Black History Month and Women’s History Month allowing opts for “black women in business profiles”.

TLL aided Elayne in securing book mentions and personal profiles, with *Forbes*, *Zora*, *Essence*, *Martha Stewart*, *Black Enterprise*, *Authority Magazine*, *Grit Daily*, and *XONecole*. We booked Elayne to be in conversation on her publication date with Ramunda Young Co-Founder of Mahogany Books. During the book campaign Elayne was profiled as a “Founder of Change” by American Express which amplified interest in our black women in business pitches for her.

To celebrate the release of *Get Over, I Got It* we idealized and coordinated a ‘Girls Night In’ virtual launch party which included a wine tasting and trivia in addition to a book club meeting with We Are Lit and a virtual mentoring discussion led by a *Forbes* contributor.

And when the pandemic restrictions relaxed, we secured Elayne a Shop & Sip event in Martha’s Vineyard during the Martha’s Vineyard African-American Film Festival hosted by India Rose a local black business owner on the island.



CASE STUDY

“Elayne is a force! She’s committed her entire career to not only sharing the powerful stories of women but sharing her own wisdom to empower us all to rise.” — **Tai Beauchamp**, co-founder of *Brown Girl Jane*

IMPACT: Elayne Fluker’s personal brand as speaker and leadership development consultant has grown considerably and includes her facilitating workshops at Omega Institute and trademarking Empowered Ask™ to further her mission of teaching high-achieving women how to make an empowered ask and embrace support so they can stress less and thrive more at work and in life.



“I’m thrilled and heartened to see books like “Get Over I Got It” being published, we’re all so tired, burned out (and quite frankly bored) by the old school mindset of ‘hustle harder’, ‘lean in’ and ‘grind it out’. Elayne nails the concept that rest and support is a source of strength, not weakness. A must-read for womxn of all ages and life stages.” — **Martine Resnick**, Co-Founder at *The Lola*, a womxn’s club and digital community



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CASE STUDY

“Rae considers the intersection of history and modernity in the American South in her provocative debut.” — **Publisher's Weekly**



“A remarkable chronicle of agency and prophetic voice. Ghosts and apparitions are among playful agents in the pages to witness a reclamation and provide a powerful fire. This haunting is but a reckoning of reconciliations and a quest for meaning in agency against oppressive forces.” — **Yes Poetry**



Ghost in a Black Girl's Throat

by **Khalisa Rae**

(Red Hen Press, 2021) *COVID-19



STARTING POINT: Khalisa Rae is a poet, activist, and journalist with previous published works including, *Real Girls Have Real Problems* and essays that have appeared in *Blk Girl Nerds*, *Autostraddle*, *Catapult*, *Lit Hub*, as well as articles in *NBC-BLK*, *B*tch Media* and others. She is the winner of the Bright Wings Poetry contest, the Furious Flower Gwendolyn Brooks Poetry Prize, and the White Stag Publishing Contest, among other prizes. She is founder of Think in Ink: A BIPOC Collective and the *Women of Color Speak* Reading Series. At the time of publication she was also the Assistant Editor at Glass Poetry and a workshop facilitator at Catapult. *Ghost in A Black's Throat* has a clear audience between poetry loves and black women readers.

CHALLENGE: Poetry is a genre in which interested readers appreciate attending live events. This book was released 1-year into the Covid-19 pandemic. Rae engaged TLL 90-days before publication which required a quick turnaround of deliverables including a hybrid book tour and pub-date press coverage.

SOLUTION: In order to get the book on the radars of its targeted demographics we would need to create a campaign using a mix of bookstores, literary magazines, bookstagrammers and reading series partners who have active community engagement with the same demographic as Khalisa Rae.

Khalisa Rae's release of *Ghost in a Black Girl's Throat* kicked off with a month long event series co-hosted with The Rumpus, Mahogany Books, Charis Books & More, Franklin Park Reading Series in Brooklyn and a launch party that featured Mahogany Browne, Jihyun, Maya Marshall, Gaia Rajan. Her highly publicized collection received press in *Essence*, *Southern Review of Books*, *Entropy*, *PANK*, *The Root*, *Reader's Digest* among others.

IMPACT:

5 nominations for the Pushcart Prize
Winner of Auburn Witness Prize
and multiple Best of the Net nominations

Khalisa Rae signed with Rebecca Friedman from the Rebecca Friedman Lit Agency for her YA Chapbook and landed a Senior Editor position at *Jezebel*. Summer 2022 along with The Literary Lobbyist Khalisa Rae was a featured guest on Morgan Stanley's podcast, *Access & Opportunity* hosted by Carla Harris. The two shared their views on Breaking Down Gatekeeping in the Publishing Industry.



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My Beautiful Black Hair: 101 Natural Hair Stories from the Sisterhood by St. Clair Detrick-Jules

(Chronicle Books, 2021) *COVID-19

STARTING POINT: After many rejections Brown University graduate, author, photographer and documentarian filmmaker St. Clair Detrick-Jules decided to self-publish her photo book *My Beautiful Black Hair*. Looking for some marketing insight Detrick-Jules contacted Rita Rosenkranz (Rita Rosenkranz Literary Agency) a literary agent who early on had rejected the project for representation.

During the racial tensions of 2020, Rosenkranz revisited the book proposal, offered St. Clair representation for which she received a deal with Chronicle Books. The author made a list of beauty and cultural writers and did some initial outreach that resulted in placements in the *Washington Post*, *The Washingtonian* and *Allure* magazine.

CHALLENGE: Author's debut book would release during the global pandemic. TLL was hired by Chronicle Books within 90-days of the publication date. This timeframe for active engagement was short.

SOLUTION: TLL understood that they book's primary audience were the community of BIPOC women writers in the media who covered books and beauty culture. The messaging would resonate with them personally and professionally. We conducted a mass book mailer and enlisted beauty bloggers, editors and writers who have written previous content around black hair to connect with Detrick-Jules for contributing articles, speaking opts, digital interviews and in-store signings.

With approximately 10-weeks of outreach, TLL and the author secured placements with: Associated Press, *Chicago Defender*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *21Ninety*, *Jezebel*, *Shepherd*, *Sweet July*, *The Root*, *Parents*, and a host of on-screen interviews with **Amazon Live**, **Black News Channel** and **Fox News** Washington DC. Additionally, a hybrid of promotional events in the south allowed St. Clair to engage safely with her audience directly. The publisher secured placement in Target's 2022 Black History Month retail promotions. *My Beautiful Black Hair* was also selected for inclusion in the NYS Department of Education Resources for Implementing and Educating About the CROWN Act.

IMPACT: Since Detrick-Jules's debut Chronicle has expressed interest in her creating another book of similar content for young readers. Detrick-Jules published an insightful byline for *Jezebel*, "Black-Owned Bookstores Safeguard Our History as Racists Try to Ban It" and has become a sought-after speaker at educational institutions from middle schools to universities (Colgate, Tuft, University of Kentucky, Shenandoah University, and others).



CASE STUDY

“The images are glorious, the anecdotes at times tender, at times seething. The entire book is powerful.”

— Elizabeth Acevado, New York Times bestselling author of *The Poet X* and *Clap When You Land*

sweetjuly.com



In Her New Book, St. Clair Detrick-Jules Celebrates All Black Hair Textures

in IMPACT by SAMANTHA HUNTER

“A love letter to all Black women who are navigating the glorious landscape of our crowns.”

— Rachel Cargie, public academic, writer, and lecturer



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CASE STUDY

“This juicy page-turner is the ultimate beach read...with characters you'll think about long after the last page. The chemistry is so steamy.” — **InStyle**



“The *Perfect Find* is just that. This funny, fashion-filled, and fiercely provocative read is absolutely fabulous for the grown and sexy woman.”

— **Niobia Bryant, National Bestselling author of *The Pleasure Trap***



“A page-turner that's epically witty, juicy and irresistible. What a perfect, fresh take on the high stakes that come when we fall, pick ourselves back up, and step unsurely into the future. It doesn't get more real than this.”

— **Denene Millner, New York Times Bestselling co-author of *Act Like a Lady, Think Like a Man*, and *The Vow***

The Perfect Find by Tia Williams

(Brown Girl Books, 2016)

STARTING POINT: Hailed as “impossibly talented” by *Lucky* magazine and “Carrie Bradshaw with melanin and a blowout” by *Heart and Soul*, novelist Tia Williams is the ultimate style insider who is known for her witty, sexy, tell-it-like-it-is approach. In 2005, the veteran magazine beauty editor (*Elle*, *Lucky*, *Glamour*, *Teen People*, and *Essence.com*) created one of the fashion industry's first beauty blogs, the award-winning *Shake Your Beauty*.

Williams is the bestselling author of *The Accidental Diva* and the *IT Chicks* series and co-writer of '80s supermodel Iman's *The Beauty of Color*. Her blog and books have been featured in *The New York Times*, *Essence*, *Women's Wear Daily*, *The Washington Post*, *Teen Vogue*, *Cosmopolitan*, *Marie Claire*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

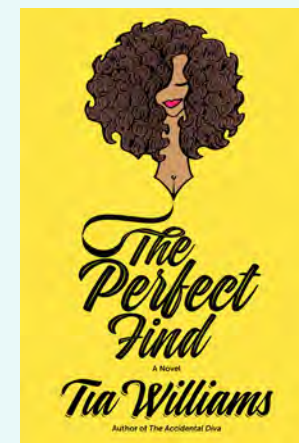
CHALLENGE: Williams had not published a book in nearly ten years. She returned to publishing with her latest title, *The Perfect Find*, released by an independent publishing company, a stark difference from the major trade publishers with whom she had previously worked. Although Williams has strong relationships with media mavens and authors, she was unsure how to best leverage them.

SOLUTION: Our team developed a publicity campaign, using multiple platforms and leveraging Williams's career achievements and publishing success to launch *The Perfect Find* multimedia campaign with television and online appearances and peer endorsements to create a more significant impact on her reemergence in the industry.

We started seven months before *The Perfect Find's* release date to reintroduce Williams and her previous works to readers. We secured a pre-publication television interview at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and a live appearance on *Cheddar TV*. We also received author endorsements from three *New York Times* bestselling authors: Denene Millner, Nicola Kraus, Mimi Jean Pamfiloff, and other notable romance and contemporary fiction writers.

After Williams's book was released, our team planned several in-person and VIP events in the New York City area at Barnes and Noble, Twitter HQ, and Bloomingdales. Then we hosted several social media engagements on Twitter and Facebook. We also secured byline and interview opportunities for Williams to share and write on various topics, including parenting, book publishing culture, and beauty and style. Additionally, our team garnered a full-page print feature Q&A in *Ebony Magazine*, a live radio interview with Sirius XM's *Bevelations*, and an open letter for Mother's Day on Glamour.com.

IMPACT: Actress Gabrielle Union optioned (*L.A.'s Finest*, *Being Mary Jane*) will star in the lead role in the feature adaptation of Williams's bestseller, slated to premiere on Netflix. Stuart Ford's AGC Studios and Union's production company, I'll Have Another, is financing and producing the romantic comedy. Numa Perrier, whose directorial debut *Jezebel* premiered at SXSW in 2019, will direct the film.



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Black Girls Must Die Exhausted

by Jayne Allen

(Quality Black Books, 2019)

STARTING POINT: Writing under a pen name, debut novelist Jayne Allen launched *Black Girls Must Die Exhausted* in September 2018. The book was available on NetGalley shortly before its official release date and remained on the site for several months afterward. This approach allowed NetGalley reviewers to post their consumer reviews directly on the book's Amazon sales page, creating early reviews and buzz.

After setting up her NetGalley page, Allen ran two Category Spotlights during the book's release month, a Featured Title placement the following month, and two additional Category Spotlights in February 2019. Allen requested publicity support to build the momentum of her book's positive early reviews.

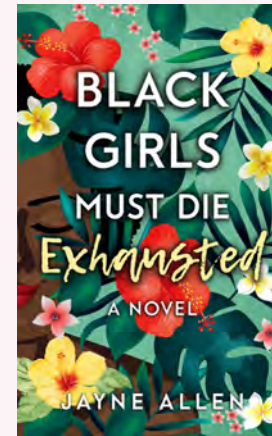
CHALLENGE: Allen self-published her book and was unknown to the fiction reading community. She needed an introduction to a targeted group of readers and a strong social media engagement plan to capture their attention and support to sell more books. However, Allen had no author or book website. She also had no Facebook page and fewer than thirty Instagram followers. Our team realized we needed to build a social media community from scratch.

SOLUTION: Our campaign strategy targeted black women who love to read contemporary novels where the protagonist's life mirrors their own in some capacity. We understood the target audience would eagerly share the book's attractive cover on their curated social media pages. We also knew the story of a black woman who works in corporate media, has close friends, is in a romantic relationship, and deals with fertility issues would be a major discussion topic with book clubs and online readers.

Our team used three engagement sources to connect with ideal target readers: Instagram, book reviews, and book clubs. We facilitated a three-day blitz with twenty-five bookstagrammers, resulting in the book cover's viral sharing, independent bookstore sales inquiries, and more than twenty-five book club appearances. The campaign included a three-city tour with a sold-out launch event at For the Culture Beauty Supply, a black woman-owned beauty supply store in Los Angeles, California. We then booked "in conversation" appearances at Auburn Avenue Research Library in Atlanta, Georgia, and planned a Cinco de Mayo-themed gathering at Mahogany Books in Maryland.

Overall, we succeeded in helping Allen find her tribe through social media and in-person events. Allen continued to engage on social media by doing giveaways and conducting live, weekly writing workshops with other reputable authors on Instagram.

IMPACT: In December 2020, Allen transformed from self-published to traditionally published author, inking a four-book deal with Harper Paperbacks, a division of HarperCollins, in a pre-empting which includes her next book after the series.



CASE STUDY

“Allen writes in a sharp, lively voice that is full of warmth and humor...Tabitha and her friends are well-drawn, and it is the dynamic between the protagonist and the women in her life that propels the story. Touching on issues of professional womanhood, race, and family, the author crafts a novel that is both timely and enjoyable.”

— Kirkus Reviews



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CASE STUDY

“Funny and delightful! Angela Shanté’s book reveals how the power of a teacher’s creative freedom ignites fun learning for students. Praises to her and all the teachers whose dedication and stamina make them the unsung heroes behind education.”

— **Pamela M. Tuck, Author, *As Fast As Words Could Fly***



“*The Noisy Classroom* is a fun read, full of humor combined with the trepidation as a young student observes the classroom teacher she’ll have next year. Changes are difficult... But, it can also be exciting. If you just give it a chance.”

— **Reader’s Favorite**

JAYNE ALLEN AND FRIENDS PRESENT
THE CINCO DE MAYO BOOKCLUB CELEBRATION!



The Noisy Classroom by Angela Shanté (West Margin Press, 2020)

STARTING POINT: Angela Shanté is a writer, poet, editor, and educator. Shanté, who has an M.Ed. in elementary education and an M.F.A. in creative writing, taught elementary school for ten years before penning *The Noisy Classroom*, her debut children’s picture book.

CHALLENGE: Shanté is an experienced educator but a first-time author with limited knowledge on how to promote herself and her book successfully.

SOLUTION: After reviewing the book, our team supplied Shanté with a list of ideal awards for independent and debut authors. We started our reader outreach with a mailer to children eight and younger. We understood that adults who followed Shanté on social media would be more responsive if they saw a child posing with the book. So we asked the parents to submit photos of their children with the book to use as social media content and stock photography for author bylines.

While Shanté and her publisher leveraged industry reviews and virtual presentations with schools and youth camps to promote her book, we highlighted her professional experience and searched for timely and relevant opportunities for her to discuss diversity in children’s literature with byline articles, “Tips to Decolonize & Diversify Your Children’s Library” and “Limiting Summer Slide by Strengthening Reading Habits at Home.” *The Noisy Classroom* also garnered inclusion in book roundups with Book Riot and Sheen Magazine.



IMPACT:

Winner, 2020 American Fiction Awards Best Cover Design: Children’s Books

Finalist, 2020 American Fiction Awards for Children’s Fiction

Finalist, 2020 The Wishing Shelf Category 2 Books for 6–8 Year Olds



Shanté announced that West Margin Press will publish her next book, *When My Cousins Come to Town*, in spring 2021.

She and a few educators launched Sunday Dinner Publishing, an independent media campaign to highlight inclusive authentic writing.

Subsequently West Margin Press hired The Literary Lobbyist in 2021 to run the publicity for The Zee Files a 6-part tween series by Tina Wells, sold exclusively at Target and Target.com at publication.



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Counting Descent by Clint Smith III

(Write Bloody Publishing, 2016)

STARTING POINT: Clint Smith is the author of *Counting Descent*, his debut poetry collection. He is widely known for his TED Talks, “How to Raise a Black Boy in America,” “The Danger of Silence,” and “Reframing the Narrative Around Our Students,” which have collectively garnered more than seven million views. Smith, a staff writer at *The Atlantic* with a Ph.D. in education from Harvard University, has been published in *The New Yorker*, *The Guardian*, *The American Library Review*, *Boston Review*, *Harvard Educational Review*, among other publications.

CHALLENGE: Promoting poetry outside of the spoken word scene can be challenging, especially for poets who are not signed with a traditional publishing house or have a promotional team or resources. In preparation for future work, Smith wanted our help to expand his audience beyond the poetry community into the mainstream nonfiction readership. He specifically requested us to promote him in independent bookstores across the U.S. and literary magazines who are often booking bigger platformed authors of traditional publishers.

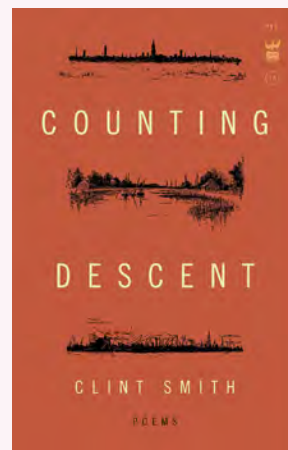
SOLUTION: Our team researched and established relationships with independent and college bookstores, tech companies, and literary magazines throughout the U.S. Since Smith was pretty new in publishing, we used his TED Talks’ popularity, bylines, and education achievements to create the perfect introduction to promote *Counting Descent* in bookstores.

We launched Smith’s book tour with more than twenty appearances across ten cities, selling advanced copies and copies at the promotional events. Six thousand books were sold in the opening six weeks of publication with media coverage in *The Boston Globe*, BK Nation, Salon.com, *Slice Magazine*, WUSA-TV’s *Great Day Washington*, *Cheddar TV* as well as special presentations at Twitter and Pandora headquarters. We concluded the campaign with a two-page photo spread in *Mosaic Literary Magazine* and a ticketed event hosted by The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture in New York City.

Since the release of *Counting Descent*, Smith was named in the 2018 *Forbes*’s 30 Under 30 list and *Ebony Magazine*’s 2017 Power 100 list. His first nonfiction book *How the Word Is Passed: A Reckoning with the History of Slavery Across America*, will publish in June 2021 with Little, Brown and Company.

IMPACT:

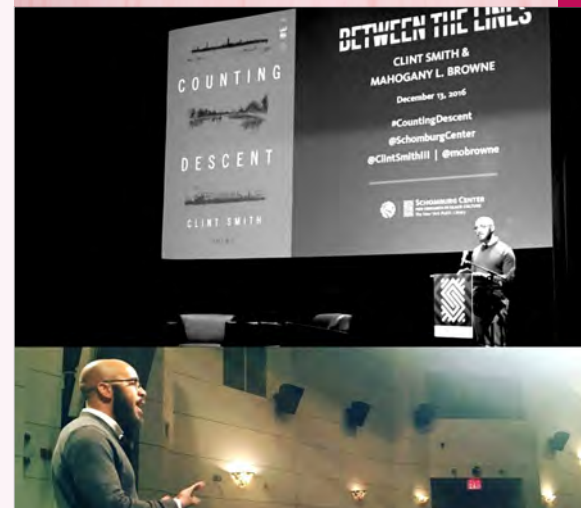
Winner, 2017 Black Caucus of the American Library Association Literary Award
Finalist, 2017 NAACP Image Awards ‘One Book One New Orleans’ 2017 Book Selection



CASE STUDY

“So many of these poems just blow me away. Incredibly beautiful and powerful.”

– Michelle Alexander, Author of *The New Jim Crow*



“*Counting Descent* is a tightly-woven collection of poems whose pages act like an invitation to New Orleans, to the spades’ table, to mom’s kitchen, to the kiss on a woman’s wrist, to conversations with hydrants and cicadas...”

– Elizabeth Acevedo



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CASE STUDY

“D. Watkins is a very sharp young talent who transformed himself from a dealer on the streets to an adjunct professor, and most important, to a leading voice of his generation who is determined to see justice for the black community. *The Beast Side* is raw, intelligent, and at times humorous—and a necessary narrative in these challenging times!”

— **Michael Eric Dyson**, author of *The Black Presidency: Barack Obama and the Politics of Race in America*



“The 21st century Civil Rights era is upon us and one of the most compelling new voices to listen to is D. Watkins. *The Beast Side* is a riveting and important read no matter what your preconceived notions are on the state of race relations in America today.”

— **Chuck Todd**, correspondent on NBC's *Meet the Press*

The Beast Side: Living and Dying While Black in America by D. Watkins

(Hot Books/Skyhorse Publishing, 2015)

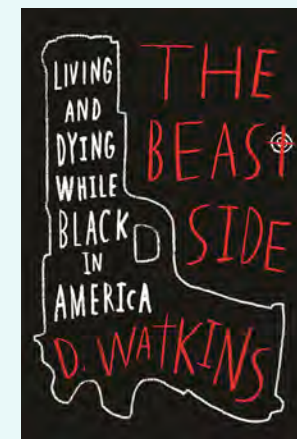
STARTING POINT: D. Watkins, one of the most influential voices in education empowerment to emerge during Freddy Gray's death, debuted his first collection of essays, *The Beast Side: Living and Dying While Black in America* in 2015 with *Hot Books*. Watkins has appeared on several news outlets in his native Baltimore, Maryland and nationally on *Meet the Press* before the book's release.

CHALLENGE: Skyhorse Publishing had hit a wall with pre-publication endorsement and requested support to secure praises from influencers in activism, black culture and media.

SOLUTION: Within two weeks of outreach *The Beast Side*, our team delivered five endorsements that were all printed on the book jacket. Skyhorse liked our work and asked us to continue booking television and radio appearances for Watkins. We booked guest appearances on H.I.S. Turning Point on BET, *MSNBC with Melissa Harris-Perry Your Black World*, *Democracy Now!*, *Al Jazeera*, *RT America*, and *Arise TV* during the six-week launch period. We also booked radio appearances on NPR's *Fresh Air*, SiriusXM's *The Maggie Linton Show*, and WOL's *The Bev Smith Show*. The media coverage along with a series of in-person events resulted in *The Beast Side* making *The New York Times* Best Sellers list in race and civil rights.



IMPACT: Since the release of *The Beast Side*, Watkins has written *The Cook Up: A Crack Rock Memoir* published by Hachette Book Group in 2016, which landed on *The New York Times* Best Seller list. He also wrote *We Speak for Ourselves: How Woke Culture Prohibits Progress*, published by Simon and Schuster in 2019. The book was the 2020 selection for One Book Baltimore, a local collaborative that promotes literacy to seventh and eighth graders, their families, and community members by reading the same book and engaging in dialogue.



“Firing off dispatches from that part of the America we left behind, D. Watkins is making a definitive argument for so many men and women ruthlessly marginalized by a society that fails to measure itself on any humane terms. This is a Baltimore voice in angry service of other unheard Baltimore voices, and *The Beast Side* is, by extension, a blunt, eloquent argument for the forgotten in our cities. He has arrived, and by the sound of things, he is here to hold us all to account.”

— **David Simon**, author of *The Corner* and creator of HBO's *The Wire*



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