



NHOUSE PUBLISHING, LLC

“HOME OF TODAY’S AUTHORS”

**SPONSORED BY
CREATIVE SPIRITS MINISTRY OF JUSTICE**

**A PUBLISHING WORKSHOP
ASK TOBIAS**

The following work has been compiled for educational purposes only and is meant to be used as a guide for the novice author and/or independent publisher. Also, there is some adult language used in some of the examples mentioned in the editorial section of this booklet.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**CREATIVE SPIRITS MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
PRESENTS ASK TOBIAS
A PUBLISHING WORKSHOP**

Don't put it off any longer. Join author-editor-publisher Tobias A. Fox for an exclusive workshop on:

- How to get started with writing your manuscript;
- What to do now that you've completed your manuscript;
- Seeking a literary agent;
- Submitting your manuscript to a publisher;
- Mainstream publishing vs. self-publishing.

You only get one first chance. This workshop reveals what most first-time authors will never realize they are doing wrong before submitting their book to agents and publishers. But with the right information, your dream of becoming a published author can happen in just weeks. Not years!

Registration: \$20 before August 20, 2009; \$30 after.

Location: (Near Central Ave) 601 Broad Street, 2nd Floor, Newark, New Jersey 07102

When: Thursday, September 10, 2009

Time: 6:30p.m. – 8:30p.m.

To register contact: Tobias A. Fox @ 973-223-9526 or tfox@nhousepublishing.com or Jihada S. Azziem-Sharif @ 973-551-4235 or jihadahsharif@yahoo.com

About The Instructor

For nearly ten years Tobias A. Fox has made his presence known in the publishing business. He is the co-author of the memoir *Dirty Justice: Who Killed Mommy* with Keith Lynch. He is also the co-author and publisher of two novels, *Dancer's Paradise: An Erotic Journey*, *At Midnight: Choice Fowler's Story*, and a short story collection titled *The E Collection: A New Definition of Erotica* with Terry W. Benjamin. He has also coached authors Sammie Ward, Meisha Camm, Wahida Clark, and editor of *Trust No Man* and *Trust No Man II* by Cash, *Thirsty* by Mike Sanders, *Ruthless Dictator* by Rumont Tekay, *Cheetah* by Missy Jackson, and *The Covah Gurls* by Constance Alexander. He also worked under the apprenticeship of literary agent Caren Johnson of Caren Johnson Literary Agency, and Michaela Hamilton, Editor in Chief of Citadel Press (an imprint of Kensington Books) and Executive Editor of Kensington Books. He is currently the Executive Editor and Publisher of nHouse Publishing, LLC, located in Rahway, New Jersey.

www.nhousepublishing.com www.myspace.com/tobiasfox www.facebook.com/tobiasfox

“It starts with a thought, follows with action, ends with success.”
—Tobias A. Fox

“I have a legacy to leave my people. It is my philosophy of living and serving. I pray now that my philosophy may be helpful to those who share my vision of a world of peace. Here is my legacy...I leave you love. I leave you the challenge of developing confidence in one another. I leave a thirst for education. I leave you a respect for the use of power. I leave you a desire to live harmoniously with your fellow men. I leave finally a responsibility to our young children.”
—Mary McLeod Bethune, 1875-1955

About the Creative Spirits of the State of New Jersey

Founded in 1979 by **Jihadah S. Azziem-Sharif**, Creative Spirits is a not for profit community organization that uses the performing arts as a base for building community betterment, education, self-realization, and constructive use of idle time. Major emphasis is placed on targeting disadvantaged inner city residents. The performing arts are utilized to deter juvenile involvement in crime. Based in East Orange, program participants are recruited primarily from the county's four cores: East Orange, Newark, Orange, and Irvington. Program participants gain encouragement and positive reinforcement thus becoming imbued with motivation to fulfill personal achievement.

Creative Spirits youth programs targets at-risk youth who can be helped through such intervention that we provide. We must build on their creative energies and place the youth where they are most content according to their needs and abilities. Thousands of our youth who should be going to school to gain the tools they need to function effectively on this planet have decided that school is a low priority on their "must list" of things to do. Their priorities are as follows: How much pain or violence can they inflict on another person. How many boys or girls they can have sex with and get pregnant and not get married. How much marijuana or crack they can smoke; how many pills they can drop; how much alcohol they can drink; how many times they can go to jail and come out un-rehabilitated, what kind of designer clothes they wear, and how much money they have, no matter how they got it. What kind of car they drive, it does not matter if they stole it.

It is not difficult to understand that by using this value system our youth victimize themselves. The end result is a high murder rate, incarceration, drug abuse, suicide, lack of education, and the list gets longer with each passing year.

Our youth are our responsibility. We, as the older generation, the elders so to speak, have a responsibility to do whatever is necessary to bring about a change. We must challenge laws and address issues that affect the lives of our community.

The "Patch Up The Cracks" program was designed to pick up where the justice system leaves off. We will place the offenders in a constructive environment that will provide them with an edge to compete and the odds that they can achieve. Working with the probation department, we will keep an adequate account of their activities and report to the courts on a daily basis.

"I Am My Brother's Keeper" will work with the youth, especially those who have been identified as gang members, and expose them to a positive environment, assist with their organizational skills, and provide the necessary tools to help them become businessmen and leaders of our society.

The "Ministry of Justice Committee" will assure that our courts provide equal access to a fair and effective system of justice for all with sensitivity to an increasingly diverse society.

nHouse Publishing, LLC

nHouse Publishing, LLC, thereafter NHP is an independent, English-language trade book publisher that specializes in general fiction, urban literature, erotica, young adult (YA), selective nonfiction such as memoirs, inspirational and self-help, audio production—adaptation into a script (abridged format) or recorded as written (unabridged format), and Spanish translations established in June 2009, by Terry W. Benjamin and Tobias A. Fox in New Jersey.

The way we express our thoughts and ourselves to others is important for better comprehension. Conveying ideas and mental pictures to the highest degree is the aim of author-editor-publisher **Tobias A. Fox**. Born in Newark and raised in East Orange, New Jersey.

Beginning his writing prowess at the age of nineteen, Fox was in disbelief after a scribbling of his first poem. The thirty-seven-year-old artist began his penmanship after the tragic loss of his mother when he was sixteen, and then his younger brother (who was sixteen) just a year later. “All sorts of emotions were going on in my head at that time and the poetry and short stories were my outlet as well as a healing process for me,” states Fox.

For nearly ten years Fox has made his presence known in the publishing business. He is the co-author of the memoir *Dirty Justice: Who Killed Mommy* with Keith Lynch. He is also the co-author and publisher of two novels, *Dancer’s Paradise: An Erotic Journey*, *At Midnight: Choice Fowler’s Story*, and a short story collection titled *The E Collection: A New Definition of Erotica* with Terry W. Benjamin. He has also coached authors Sammie Ward, Meisha Camm, Wahida Clark, and editor of *Trust No Man* and *Trust No Man II* by Cash, and *Thirsty* by Mike Sanders.

For five years Fox ran and operated (with Terry W. Benjamin) nHouse Publishing, LLC, an independent English-language trade book publisher located in Rahway, New Jersey. During the summer of 2006 Fox decided to master the craft of book publishing and enrolled into The City College of New York where he completed a Publishing Certificate Program with a 4.0 grade point average. He then worked under the apprenticeship of literary agent Caren Johnson of Caren Johnson Literary Agency, and then Michaela Hamilton, Editor in Chief of Citadel Press (an imprint of Kensington Books) and Executive Editor of Kensington Books.

Fox then teamed up with national bestselling author Wahida Clark as a publishing consultant and Executive Editor with the launching of Wahida Clark Presents Publishing, LLC; whereas, he assisted with the publications of *Trust No Man* by Cash and *Thirsty* by Mike Sanders.

In addition to book publishing, for nearly ten years Fox has been a mentor to youth offenders through the non-profit community arts organization Creative Spirits of the State of New Jersey and received numerous awards including proclamations from the Townships of Irvington and East Orange for overcoming tremendous odds.

Author-publisher and English professor **Terry W. Benjamin** received his B.A. in Journalism from Rider University and studied Playwriting at the Mason Gross School of Fine Arts. Pulling thoughts from books, magazines, newspapers and interviews is where this prolific writer gets his ideas. Born in Staten Island, New York, and raised in Elizabeth, New Jersey, Benjamin is the creator of the concept Rap Music as Literature and as a result has been featured on PBS (Public Broadcast Station) and various publications. He has hosted many seminars on Hip Hop music

and culture and is currently teaching English related courses at colleges and universities throughout New Jersey. He is the co-author and publisher of two novels, *Dancer's Paradise: An Erotic Journey*, *At Midnight: Choice Fowler's Story*, and a short story collection titled *The E Collection: A New Definition of Erotica* with Tobias A. Fox.

Currently, six titles are under development. The order of publication is subject to change:

- *Deception* by Jackie White scheduled for release in January 2010;
- *Caught Up in the Mix* by Jennifer Luckett scheduled for release in March 2010;
- *Corruption* by Gregory A. McRae & Robert L. Thompson scheduled for release in May 2010;
- *The Covah Gurls* by Constance Alexander scheduled for release in July 2010;
- *Doesn't Fit the Profile* by Terry B. scheduled for release in September 2010; and
- *Corruption 2: Eyes of Betrayal* by Gregory A. McRae & Robert L. Thompson scheduled for release in November 2010;

Vision

NHP will represent a new generation of creative and energetic publishers that take multimedia approaches to entertain, educate, and inspire readers. The company will evolve into a global media company with audio, film, and publishing productions in the next ten years.

Mission

NHP will produce and market literary works that entertain and educate, but most importantly reflect the society we live in. It plans to distribute them via bookstores, book clubs, libraries, mass merchandisers, and online book retailers. In doing so, the aim is to:

- Promote self-awareness, self-reliance, and self-actualization;
- Promote cultural and artistic consciousness;
- Cultivate achievement behavior among socially disadvantaged individuals, particularly those living in an urban environment.

Values

- To writers, NHP represents a dedicated support to their literary careers. This is the company's slogan: Home of Today's Authors;
- To readers, NHP represents the historical records of the unknown, their passions, and dreams;
- To book retailers and distributors, NHP represents what the reader market yearns for.

SERVICES

EDITING

\$3.00 per page; two – three weeks turnaround
\$5.00 per page for two rounds of edits of your manuscript

GHOSTWRITING

\$2,500 includes writer's credit and percentage of advance and royalties
\$6,000 if you want to obtain all credit

PUBLISHING CONSULTANT

\$2,500 Includes:
Editing; ISBN; Back cover copy;
LCCN registration so that your book is sold to libraries
Barcode;
Press Kit;
Galley Letter;
Marketing Plan;

A mailing list of 80 book buyers, including those that report to *Essence* magazine;
You provide printing and mailing cost of all material sent to media contacts and book buyers.

5 Questions That Could Change Everything

1. What do I bring to the table?
2. What's been running me?
3. What's been calling me?
4. What confronts me?
5. What will unleash me?

- 1.) I bring to the table nearly ten years of experience and knowledge of the publishing business from an independent and mainstream perspective. Also, a passion for writing, reading, and developing creative ways to make sure my voice is heard.
- 2.) I believe faith and a serious commitment to succeed as an author and publisher has been fueling me not to give up. Also, knowing that others have achieved what I am trying to accomplish gives me the reinsurance that my goals are achievable.
- 3.) Writing and book publishing seems to have been calling me for some years now. I had doubts in the beginning, but as I continue to meet others in the business I become even more confident that I have what it takes to succeed in this unpredictable business.
- 4.) Self-doubt and money usually prevents me from moving a step closer to my goals. I now realize that money usually finds its way to you as long as you are persistent and believe in what you are trying to accomplish. I also realized that for each failed attempt I become one step closer toward reaching my goals.
- 5.) A single opportunity, a cracked window or door will unleash me. Success is when persistence meets opportunity and when this happens I will flourish.

Tobias A. Fox
08/17/09

5 Questions That Could Change Everything

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The Publishing Process

Many people and factors come into play to transform an author's unpublished manuscript into a finished book available to readers. This publishing process varies among the various imprints, as well as between children and adult books. This is a general sketch of the process:

Manuscript Conception

Manuscript – original text of a book.

An idea, an outline, or a manuscript for a book can enter into a publishing house in a number of ways:

- 1) Solicited – submitted to a specific editor by a literary agent who represents an author.
- 2) Unsolicited (slush pile) – not addressed to anyone specific, often submitted by an author without the aid of an agent.
- 3) Sought out – editor seeks out an author to write a book on a specific topic (almost always through an agent).

Submission Guidelines:

We do not publish poetry (at this time)

For nonfiction, send cover letter/query, including the author's qualifications and connections relevant to the book's content and marketing, and summary or outline of book's content, along with the first five chapters.

All submissions must be formatted in the proper format:

- Typed, one sided, double spaced
- Paragraph starts indented
- 1" margins on all four sides of the page
- For emphasis, use italics
- Avoid non-standard, fancy fonts and unnecessary changes in font face size, etc. Must be legible or we can't read it.
- Use chapter headers and scene break indicators (i.e. **** or #####)
- Title, author's (last name only is fine) and page number at the top of each page are mandatory. For example: Deception/White Page 15
- Your full name, mailing address, email and/or telephone number must be on the first page.

If you would like your submitted material returned, please provide a self-addressed stamped envelope large enough to contain the material you submitted and the correct return postage. **Do not send loose stamps, cash, or checks for postage.**

If you do not wish your material returned, please indicate this by writing **DO NOT RETURN** on the first page of your submission in the upper right-hand corner. If you do not write this we will take it that you do not wish your manuscript returned.

All submissions will take three to six months for review. We will send you a confirmation letter concerning our interest in your work after it has been reviewed. **PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE NHP OFFICE.**

You may **QUERY ONLY** by e-mail. Do not attach manuscripts or proposals to e-mail queries. An editor will respond if he or she is interested in seeing your material based on your query.

Decision to Publish

During the decision on whether or not to publish, there are several things that take place. First, the editor reads through the proposed book to determine if he/she likes it, how many other similar types of books are currently being published or are planned to be published, and if he/she thinks it will have appeal to the book-purchasing public. The editor usually then asks others (publisher, marketing director, publicity director, rights director, and sales director) to read the manuscript. The readers then discuss their opinions with the editor. For example, the publicity director will report whether the book would garner media interest, the marketing director will discuss advertising and promotional possibilities, and the sales director will estimate how many copies the book could be sold.

If there is sufficient interest in the work, the publisher will authorize the editor to bid for the book up to a certain amount of money. To help determine how much money can be spent to buy the book, the publisher might request a P&L (profit and loss statement). A P&L is an analysis that shows how profitable a book would be if published given a group of parameters, including how much it would cost to produce and market the book and how much potential income could be generated by sales of the book.

The agent will either accept or reject the editor's offer. If accepted, the editor begins working with the contracts department to draft a contract that is mutually acceptable to both the publisher and the author.

Editing

Editing prepares a manuscript for publication and normally takes place in several stages. First the editor works with the author either by phone or letter on large-scale issues about the book: Are the characters believable and involving? Is the plot interesting, or are there lulls that might be fixed? Is the book too short or too long to satisfy a reader (and to be published at a reasonable price)? In a nonfiction manuscript, is the reader presented with the most up-to-date information?

Once the manuscript is in good shape, the editor may take the additional step of line-editing: going through the book sentence-by-sentence to suggest word changes, fix stilted dialogue, delete repetitions, or move information around so that the story flows smoothly. Naturally, some manuscripts need more polishing than others.

Next, the manuscript goes to a copy-editor, whose work is overseen by the **managing editorial department**. At this stage the fine-tuning is done: the copy-editor will correct spelling and punctuation errors, will question any remaining awkwardness in the way the author expresses

himself, and will mark up the text with standard symbols to instruct the typesetter how it should set the book in type. After the copy-edit is done, the manuscript will be returned to the author for one last read. At this stage the author should make any final changes he/she wishes before type is actually set.

Art/Design

The art department is responsible for the graphic aspects of the book. Designers work on cover and interior design, layout and typography. They ensure that the book is an appropriate visual representation of the manuscript.

Production

During production, the text and cover are worked on simultaneously until the production materials are ready to be sent to the printer/binder for manufacturing.

The manuscript and type specifications are sent to a text compositor who formats the text pages. A complete set of page-proofs are created by the compositor and these are sent to production for proofreading. The compositor will make the necessary corrections and show a new set of revised page-proofs. This process continues until all corrections have been made. Once final approval of the text is given, the production arranges for the compositor to send the text portion of the book to the printer.

Simultaneously, production sends the cover and cover artwork for the book to the printer, who assembles them and prepares a color proof of the cover. The printer sends the color proof to production and revises the proofs as necessary. Once approval is given, the printer will print the cover.

Marketing

The marketing department plays a crucial role getting information about our books to bookstores and their customers. Key marketing vehicles include seasonal and subject catalogs; point of purchase items such as floor displays, banners and posters; direct mail; and print, radio, television, online and transit advertising. Internet promotions are frequently used. The department provides regular support to both sales and publicity as needed to successfully promote new and back-list books. The marketing department, in coordination with the sales and editorial departments, is closely involved with the advance planning of the publication of books. All creative and design work for promotion and publicity is done within the department, also with the help of outside advertising agencies when necessary.

Publicity

The publicity department is responsible for delivering top-quality media coverage, for authors and the company that creates consumer awareness and generates revenue. To that end, the department generates attention via the placement of book reviews on national and local media, author appearances, interviews, bookstore signings, readings and lectures.

Sales

The sales force is the “eyes and ears of the organization.” It is responsible for interacting with the customers and reporting back to the company about the consumer book market. This information from the field is helpful in assessing book profitability.

Even more important, the field sales representatives help get our books out to the customers and readers. They do this by calling the customers, introducing them to the books that are being published, and taking orders.

Other departments that is essential to the publishing process:

Publishing Operations

Publishing operations’ primary responsibility is to monitor and maintain inventory for new printing and back-list titles. This department also coordinates information flow and procedures among the warehouses, the departments and the clients. In addition, the remainders division handles the sale of overstock material.

Contracts

The contracts department negotiates and drafts contracts with authors, publishers, and other third parties. It also negotiates and drafts contracts for the sale of subsidiary rights, which include reprints of previously published titles, renewals of older titles, and book club sales. This department processes permission requests to reprint selections from our books, registers copyright protection for all of our titles with the Library of Congress, and handles amendments and revisions for our authors. The contracts department acts as the liaison between authors, agents, attorneys, and various departments throughout the company.

Advance – payment given to the author by the publisher, usually prior to the release of the author’s works. However, the author will not be able to collect on their royalties until the publisher has recouped the entire advance. Advance payments vary, depending on the publisher. Some independent publishers do not give advance payments. This is not always a bad thing.

Royalties – payment from book sales paid out to the author by the publisher, usually during the months of June and December.

- A. On copies sold in the United States:
 - i. hardcover editions:
 - 10% of the retail price on the first 5,000 copies;
 - 12.5% of the retail price on the next 5,000 copies; and
 - 15% of the retail price on all copies thereafter.
 - ii. trade paperback editions:
 - 7.5% of the retail price.
 - iii. mass market editions:

nHouse Publishing, LLC

8% of the retail price on the first 150,000 copies; and
10% of the retail price on all copies thereafter.

Subsidiary Rights

The subsidiary rights department handles the licensing of rights to the company's books for magazine excerpts, book club sales, paperback reprints, translation rights to foreign publishers, and audio/electronic rights.

The terms "license" and "sub-license" shall not include nor apply to any publication by an affiliate company of the Publisher.

		<u>Publisher's Share</u>	<u>Author's Share</u>
i.	First serial	10%	90%
ii.	Foreign language (including print, Audio Work, Electronic Versions, Serial, full-length, condensed or Abridged formats)	25%	75%
iii.	British Commonwealth (including print, Audio Work, Electronic Versions, serial, full-length, Condensed or abridged formats)	20%	80%
iv.	Abridgment, adaptation anthology, Audio Work, book club, Condensation, deluxe, digest, educational, Electronic Versions, graphic, hardcover reprint, large print, library, microfiche, microfilm, omnibus, paperback reprint, permission, second serial and syndication	50%	50%
v.	Dramatic, motion picture, radio, television, video, videodisc, commercial exploitation (toys, games, posters, etc) purposes	10%	90%

Distribution

Distribution is the selling, warehousing, and fulfilling of customers' orders; getting the product out to the customer. In addition with working with distributors and wholesalers, such as Baker & Taylor, A&B Books, Black & Noble, and others, NHP also provide distribution for its titles.

Order Processing

There are two ways to order a book. The order-processing department either receives an order through the sales force or directly from a customer.

Once an order is placed, a customer representative checks the account to verify the account number and to confirm accuracy of the account information. When the order is entered into the computer, discounts and stock checks are applied. The computer also verifies that the customer's purchase does not exceed his/her credit limit. Last, the computer creates invoices and communicates with the warehouses.

Warehouses

Warehouses are responsible for picking and shipping customers' orders. The warehouse receives a picking list, generated by the computer, which indicates which and how many books need to be picked and shipped for each customer.

After the books are picked and packed, they are sent to a weighing area. Here, a machine weighs the books to ensure that the number of books on the invoice weigh approximately the same as the books that have been picked for the box.

The warehouse is also responsible for books that are returned from customers. When a customer returns a book or a shipment of books, the warehouse completes a broad check of the books and enters the return information into the computer.

Customer Service

All members of the customer service team are responsible for responding to customer inquiries. Many inquiries have to do with book and order information. At times, adjustments have to be made to a customer's account. These adjustments often require a fair amount of research and patience.

Customers

There are many different types of customers who do business with publishing companies, including:

Wholesalers – Intermediaries who distribute/sell to bookstores and libraries. Their customers include retail bookstores (trade and chain) as well as libraries and institutions (e.g., universities).

Jobbers – Intermediaries who distribute/sell books primarily to non-book retail stores. Their customers tend to be non-traditional outlets that sell books as well as other types of merchandise. They may include supermarkets, drug stores, newsstands and stationery stores.

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Retail: Trade/Chain – A trade account is an account with few locations. Chain accounts are those with many locations, such as Barnes & Noble and Borders. The main difference between chain and retail trade accounts is the volume of business they do and their purchasing habits.

Institutions – Includes customers such as libraries, universities, elementary and high school sales.

Special Sales – Special sales includes non-book stores, corporate or “premium” stores. These customers typically buy books on a non-returnable basis. Non-book stores are those stores that do not fit into our retail customer category, such as charitable organizations. Corporate sales are books that we sell in quantities to corporations for non-retail use.

Authors – Per their contract agreement, authors may receive a certain number of their own books for free and a discount on additional copies above the agreed amount.

Individual Consumers – People who buy books directly from a publishing house.

Book Clubs – Such as Black Expressions, Double Day, etc.

The Writing Process

“A writer’s tools are a pen/pencil, notepad/notebook, recording device for interviews, and computer/laptop with the use of the internet for research purposes.”

—Tobias A. Fox

Whether while I’m doing my laundry, stopped at a traffic light, or swimming across the Atlantic Ocean, people are always stopping me and asking how they begin the process of putting their thoughts on paper. To be honest, this is by far a tough question because I have never had this problem and didn’t know it was a problem for others.

I then realized that over the course of time I begin to develop techniques that helped enhance my ability to tell stories, develop compelling characters, and intriguing plots. I’d like to share some of these helpful techniques with you. The first is a way to help you develop your characters through the use of a character bio. The more defined your characters are the more believable they will appear to the reader.

How to Write a Selling Screenplay by Christopher Keane

Character Bio:

How old is your character? What is his/her height and weight? Eye and hair color? Scars, tattoos and handicaps? Educational background? What type of music does he/she listen to? Everyone has a special room, a place to hide or think. What’s his/hers? Describe this environment or mental state?

The Past World

- Where was he/she born?
- In affluence or poverty, or in between?
- Who was the most influential person (positive/negative) in his/her young life?
- Did his/her parents argue and fight?
- Was there a divorce, deaths of loved ones? What were the moments—good and bad—that he/she remember most?
- Would he/she say he had a happy childhood? Why, why not? Be specific.
- Who brought him/her up?
- How did he/she feel about them?
- How does he/she feel about them now?
- Was he/she closer to his mother, or his father? Why?
- Did he/she move a lot, or did he/she stay put in one house?
- Brothers, sisters?
- Was he/she an only child?
- Did he/she have many friends, real or imaginary?
- Did he/she spend a lot of time alone?

- What are his/her most upsetting memories?
- Was his/her family nurturing?
- Was there alcoholism, addictions, anger, arguments?
- What kind of trouble, if any, upset the family?
- In his/her group of friends was he/she a leader? A follower?
- Did he/she fit in? Or in order to fit in, did he/she do things he/she should not have—like drink or take drugs—to be accepted?

Let's move forward, into his/her adolescence, into his/her teens.

- How did he/she get along with his/her peers, or not get along?
- What about sex? Was it difficult, nonexistent? Frustrating?
- Love? Perhaps he/she was filled with love but had no one to give it to.
- Or perhaps he/she needed love, but no one was offering it. How did he/she react to this? What did he/she do?
- What were his/her most upsetting memories in adolescence?

In adulthood your character is good at something. The childhood influences take form and shape. Perhaps a good work ethic emerges, or a poor one. Pay attention to influences. Mom's business acumen, Dad's artistic talent. Your character is influenced by events in the past. Draw the lines between then and now.

- In the present does he/she have trouble getting along with people? Or does people have a difficult time getting along with him/her? Why?
- What doesn't he/she want the world to see? How does he/she hide it?
- What does he/she do to compensate for it?
- What does your character do?
- Is he/she spontaneous, overeager, impatient?
- Does he/she rush into things, into relationships or love affairs?
- Or does he/she hesitate? Is he/she conservative, cautious, do you look before you leap? Has this created problems, like not acting fast enough?

The Present World

How does he/she see the world in general, through what kind of eyes? A musician's, a stock trader's, a housewife's, a fashion designer's? What does your character's profession mean to him/her? How far will they go to protect it, to keep it, to rid themselves of it? Is your character obsessed with the job? Where would he/she like to be in life at this moment? Where does he/she work now and what does he/she do? With whom does he/she live with? Is there harmony or strife at home? Describe his/her living situation? How does he/she interact with the people he/she lives with and what relation are they to him/her? Does he/she spend time alone or surround himself/herself with people? Does he/she find stability at home? How does he/she see himself/herself? How do others see him/her? How does he/she think others see him/her? How would he/she like others to see him/her?

The Private Self

In the private life of a character, you discover strange little habits, hobbies, a behavior, things he/she does alone or beyond the home and the job. What does your character do when he's/she's alone? Why? How does this make him/she feel?

Use of a Recording Device

Another technique one can use is a recording device. I find it very helpful to dictate my thoughts into a tape recorder and then return to it at a later time to transcribe what I had recorded. A tape recorder becomes very handy whenever I'm ghostwriting for someone because I'm able to capture the subject's voice.

Working with a Co-Author/Ghostwriter

Also, if a person just feels that no matter how many writing courses they take or books they read on the art of storytelling they will never be able to write a complete sentence. However, they have a gift of verbally telling a story, causing the audience to feel like they are living through the experience. This person (storyteller) may consider teaming up with a co-author, someone who can work with him/her, or hire a ghostwriter, a person who can write the story for them. If you are unable to hire a ghostwriter you may want to ask the writer if they would be willing to co-author the book with you and share all credit.

Working from an Outline

An outline enables you to see your manuscript from start to finish. You have an idea of the order of events occurring in your novel. It is like the skeleton to your story. It prevents you from overwriting scenes that are not necessary and keeps you focused on your story, versus straying away into unrelated subjects. The outline can and will change as you begin to actually write out the novel, but you now have a blueprint to work from.

When Terry and I are working on a novel I first like to determine the length of the story we are about to tell. Normally I estimate it to be about 300 pages so that we can set the price, if soft cover, at \$14.00 or more.

So let's say we are writing a novel at 300 pages. Let's break this down into three acts.

ACT I – the beginning; pages 1-75

This tells the reader about your main character(s). Here the reader learns needed information about your characters and what the story is about.

ACT II – the middle or confrontation; pages 76-225

This is where the main character is faced with obstacle after obstacle. The character knows what it wants but just can't seem to reach his or her goal(s). This is where the reader is pulling for the character to overcome or defeat its enemy, whether external or internal.

ACT III – the ending or resolution; pages 226-300

This is where the main character reaches down into their soul one last time to make the attempt to reach his or her goal(s). Their back is against the wall and they must come out fighting at all cost.

DIRTY JUSTICE
Guilty Until Proven Innocent
By
Keith Lynch

OUTLINE

ACT I

I. OPEN STATEMENT

II. THE PERFECT SUSPECT – Intercut (flashback) this with Keith Lynch being in jail. Show how Keith spent his time in jail before he became involved in his case (fighting and distancing himself from the other inmates).

1. Keith is in Dekalb County Jail in reflecting back on his childhood.
 - a. The Lynch philosophy and father's influence
 - b. Being the oldest
2. Love of boxing, Golden Gloves
3. Military years
4. Involvement with drugs, dealing and using
5. First son is born
6. Meeting of Gina
7. Marriage and children with Gina
8. Problems in Keith's and Gina's marriage
9. Keith have Gina arrested
10. Keith moves to Georgia
11. Keith meets up with his cousin Olander Lynch and becomes a part of a "fraud scam"
12. Gina moves down to Georgia with Keith and becomes friends with Olander. Their marriage is still in ruins but they try to hold on for their children
13. Keith suggests their son move back to New Jersey with his mother to develop his academics. Gina doesn't agree with this, but gives in
14. Keith and Olander has a huge falling out
15. Gina and their twin daughters return home from a weekend at Olander's
16. Gina disappears
17. Keith is accused by Olander of doing Gina some harm (*Turning Point*)

ACT II

- III. WRONGFULLY ACCUSED** – Intercut (flashback) this with Keith Lynch being in jail. Show how Keith spent his time in jail before he became involved in his case (fighting and distancing himself from the other inmates).
- The search for Gina and her car begins
 - Gina’s body and her car is found
 - Keith losses his children
 - Keith is arrested and charged with the murder of his wife. Keith’s mother is also on the scene when this occurs
 - Keith receives a letter from his mother while in jail. After reading this letter Keith decides to challenge the legal system and prove his innocence (Turning Point)
- IV. WHO KILLED MOMMY** – Show how Keith spent his time in jail after receiving his discovery and becoming involved in his case, trying to piece together this puzzle (“legal sessions” with other inmates, still fighting and distancing himself from the other inmates as well). (Turning Point)

ACT III

- V. GUILTY UNTIL PROVEN INNOCENT**
- Keith has problems with the public defender’s office
 - Keith finally pulls together his defense team
 - The defense prepares for their case
 - Olander meets a tragedy
 - Keith is due in court for the last time
- VI. CLOSING STATEMENT**

Or you can do a chapter by chapter outline, which is more detailed such as:

CHAPTER ONE

Stepfather, John Thomas Lewis, thirty-six, and Jihad “Auto” Johnson, sixteen, are riding in a U-Haul truck through the streets of Newark and East Orange, New Jersey. Mother, Rita Jenkins-Lewis, thirty-four, and youngest son, Lamar Lewis, seven, are following in the family’s BMW Jeep. They are moving from Durham, North Carolina, to East Orange, New Jersey, due to a job opportunity in the real estate business for John.

John is originally from East Orange and has his own real estate business—JL’s Development Group. He is apart of an urban housing development program launched by the Mayor of East Orange. This program involves the demolition and rebuilding of forty-five foreclosed apartment buildings, private residences, and commercial buildings. John’s company has a three-year contract with the city of East Orange. John and Rita’s plan is to live in East Orange for three years, and then John will purchase another home in the suburbs for his family.

CHAPTER TWO

John plays with the radio dial and finds a classic Stevie Wonder song on 98.7 fm. “Now this is music, not like that rap crap you be listening to,” says John to Jihad. Jihad pretty much ignores

the statement and looks out the window, observing the scenery. He notices the different groups of people, old and young, hanging out on nearly every street corner. He also notices the graffiti on the walls of different street gangs in the neighborhood and other graffiti artwork.

CHAPTER THREE

They finally make it to their destination: 63 North Grove Street, East Orange, New Jersey 07017. They all exit their vehicles and begin to unload their lives into their new home.

The Manuscript

Once you're done, your manuscript should appear in the following format:

A Broken Home

Fox / 1

It was the summer of 1978. I had awakened from a colorful dream to the smell of buttermilk pancakes. I lazily got out of bed and walked into the kitchen. My mother was standing at the stove; she turned her thick frame toward me and smiled.

“Hey, baby, I thought you'd never wake up.”

I smiled back.

She stood at five-five, with a caramel complexion, and had a thing for stylish wigs. Already sitting at the table were my two younger brothers, Anthony and Lorenzo, my older brother, Frederick, and the giant of us all, Pop. Fred sat on the left of my father; whereas, my mother would sit on his right. I managed to squeeze in between Fred and Ant and we all waited in silence for our mother to place the last pancake on the table and take her seat. It was a seating arrangement designed by our dad. He always liked order in his house.

With outstretched hands, he said, “Let us pray.” His deep voice shattered the silence that dwelled in our small kitchen. And on cue we all locked hands, lowered our heads, and received the blessings God was able to place on our table.

But that image of a happy home wouldn't last long. It was as if we sat high on a wall and then took a great big fall, and not even all the King's men could pull us back together again.

Before I knew it my mother and father separated due to marital problems. We lived on the third floor of a four-story building in East Orange, New Jersey. The weird thing of it all is that my mother moved my three brothers and me out of our apartment and into her girlfriend's apartment on the second floor. Even though we still lived in the same building, we didn't see our father for nearly two weeks nor did we hardly leave the apartment. In a trembling voice our mother instructed us to never open the front door for anybody, not even for our dad.

At ages five, six, seven, and eight, we were too young to understand the full scope of what was going on. It seemed like a big game to us.

Reality didn't set in until one day, while my brothers and me where staying the night with our father, we heard a loud noise, and then a scream coming from the hallway. We all ran out of the apartment to see what was going on.

It was explained to me years later that after an all girls night out, my mother and her girlfriend were in the building heading to their apartment when my father came out of his hiding place and chased after them. They took off running with my mother's girlfriend leading the way. When they reached the apartment the girlfriend quickly ran inside, but due to her panic, shut the door in my mother's face and locked it. My mother banged on the door and pleaded for her friend to open it, but her pleas turned into screams once my father approached her.

While standing at the top of the steps we witnessed our mother curled up on the floor pleading for her life as our father's five-ten, muscular frame towered over her with his huge, brick mason hands wrapped around the handle of an axe.

Up until then my father was well respected in the neighborhood. He was known by many as Reverend Fox, I knew him as Pop, but he had changed altogether and we were too young to

notice. A relative had told me years later that he had started drinking and it was obvious that the spirits of the alcohol had inflicted his mind with evil thoughts.

My brothers and I cried out, “No, Daddy, don’t kill mommy!”

In tears I fell to my knees, locked hands, bowed my head, and shut my eyes tight. I prayed harder than I ever prayed before. My father once told me that he named me directly from the Bible. “Come here, son,” he would say to me. “You’re special, you know that?”

I would never know what to say, so I said nothing.

“I asked God to give me a name for you and then I opened my Bible. The first name that stood out was Tobias. Ain’t that somethin’? You know, Tobias means ‘the good of God.’ And I see nothing but greatness in you, son.”

I figured if I was so great I could pray this terrible nightmare away, but that would not be the case. When I opened my eyes things went from bad to worst. My father had the look of a murderer as he swung and repeatedly hit my mother on top of her head with the back of the axe. I had never seen such anger before in my life.

Apparently, my father discovered that my mother was having an affair and that the affair was with her girlfriend whom she was now living with on the second floor. Releasing his anger on my mother seemed to be the only way he could deal with his emotions.

After it was all said and done, my father was sent to jail and my mother was rushed off to the hospital, leaving my brothers and me a ward of the court. What was supposedly had been a temporary situation ended up a permanent living arrangement. And that’s how my brothers and I came to live with our aunt and uncle at 63 North Grove Street. This would not have been a bad

living situation, but they were raising ten children of their own. My brothers and I quickly went from being a happy, loving family to a product of poverty and neglect.

Nearly two years would pass before seeing my father again. It would be even longer for my mother. Neither of us was the same after that dreadful day. The memories still haunt my dreams. It was as if our lives had come crumbling down due to the shaky ground we were planted on.

How Do You Get A Nonfiction Book Published?

by [W. Terry Whalin](#)

<http://www.right-writing.com/published-nonfiction.html>

Possibly you have grown passionate about a particular topic and you've started writing the book. It's a secret dream and desire of many people. They have no training or idea how to publish a book--but they begin the discipline of writing. It's admirable that these individuals have taken the effort to complete the manuscript. Then these people want to get it published so they go to the library and get a writer's market guide. They bundle their manuscript and send it into a publisher. After weeks of waiting, they receive a form rejection letter. Wanting to persist, they try again--and get rejected repeatedly.

Does it sound familiar? Here's a statistic that startles many people: **90% of nonfiction books are sold from a book proposal**. The majority of these books have not been written--but a proposal has been carefully crafted to catch the attention of a publisher. This proposal will contain a number of elements which are not in the manuscript but important elements for the publisher to catch the vision and issue a book contract. You can learn more about book proposals through Terry's book, [Book Proposals That Sell, 21 Secrets To Speed Your Success](#). Or you can instantly purchase the electronic version.

After more than 20 years in the publishing business, Terry Whalin has written more than 60 nonfiction books for a variety of age groups. He has written books on his own and also he has co-authored many books for others. Besides his writing, Terry has worked on the inside of publishing houses as an acquisitions editor. This page will be a jumping point for you to learn more about nonfiction from his perspective. This page pulls together a variety of suggestions for any nonfiction writer. You can trust his suggestions to be backed with years of experience.

It doesn't matter if you are published or unpublished. Terry invites you to read the articles, use the resources on this page. Please mark this page on your list of favorites so you can return to it often as it will change, have additions and be updated.

Completing the First Draft

Once you feel that your manuscript is "complete" celebrate! You deserve it. Take some time off from writing because what's ahead requires much of your time, commitment, and energy. The next thing you should do is copyright your manuscript. Ideas and titles aren't protected by the Library of Congress, but your literary works are. This can even be done online at www.Lcweb.loc.gov/copyright. The filing fee to copyright a manuscript is \$45. If you do it online the fee is \$35. It's just that simple!

You do not have to wait for the library of congress to respond. Once they have received your manuscript by certified mail, along with your completed application and filing fee you can feel free to display COPYRIGHT © 2009 BY TOBIAS A. FOX on the cover of your manuscript. But please, put your name and not mine. You owe it to yourself.

Working with an Editor

Testimony

“Writing my first novel was quite an experience. It was my first attempt and I had to learn the writing process. I had to stay determined and focused. First step was to get rid of the distractions and stress, review basic story telling, do lots of research, and never give up! I loved working with my editor [Tobias] because he is incredible and his background spoke for itself, with the editing that he did with authors that I have much respect for and who led the way for urban writers. So my advice is to keep writing no matter what. Share your complete draft with readers of your genre to receive feedback, revise your work, and...Good luck!” —Jennifer Luckett, author of *Caught Up*.

Editing is essential especially for any writer because it enhances their literary work and makes it comprehensive to the reader. There are essentially two types of editors, an acquisitions editor and copyeditor (line editor).

The *copyeditor* (line editor) goes through the literary work line by line to check for proper word usage, consistent style and tone, correct grammar and punctuation, and correct cross-references. The copyeditor creates parallel structure within the text, changes the passive voice to active, eliminates wordiness and jargon, and smoothes out sentence and paragraph transitions to improve readability.

The acquisitions editor operates in a different manner. I think the article below says it all.

What’s an acquisitions editor?

How can I help this editor?

by [W. Terry Whalin](#)

<http://www.right-writing.com/acquisitions.html>

Some times when I introduce myself, I’ll say that I’m an acquisitions editor. You can almost see the glazed look come over listeners’ faces and mentally they ask a question that sometimes they don’t verbalize, “What’s an acquisitions editor?” Its simple, I find the books for my publishing house to publish.

For the last five years, I’ve worked as an acquisitions editor at two publishing houses. Most full-time acquisitions editors acquire between 15-20 books in a year.

Many editors have acquisitions as a part of their job responsibilities but it’s the total responsibility for an acquisitions editor. It means that I’m often the first contact for an unpublished writer. Each of the two publishers, where I’ve worked, consider or accept unsolicited manuscripts. Because of the poor quality of these submissions, most major publishers do not accept unsolicited manuscripts. Their submissions come from a literary agent or an author with an established relationship with the publishing house. When a publisher considers unsolicited manuscripts, it is a virtual onslaught of material. The majority of this onslaught is presented in an unprofessional manner and not written well—truth be told.

An acquisitions editor not only finds the manuscripts but they champion the manuscript within the publishing house. I've often told writers that I characterize publishing as a consensus building process. I may be convinced your book project is perfect for our needs—but I have to convince a number of other people including my fellow editors, sales people, marketing personnel and the leaders of the publishing house your book is worthy to appear in print. For any publisher to take your book and print it, they will spend about \$50,000 to \$100,000—and this cost includes only a modest advance to the author (\$5,000 or less). As an author who had written over 55 books with traditional publishers, I had no idea the publisher was investing this amount of money in my idea to put it into print—before several years ago when I started working inside a publishing house. The author never sees the actual financial numbers for the cost of the paper or the editorial or the marketing expenses for the book yet I know firsthand the investment. It's a considerable investment—and numerous people seriously weigh the risks.

Not Waiting for the Bestseller

Most acquisitions editors are not waiting for the golden best-selling manuscript to simply drop into their mailboxes. We are proactively looking for new projects. I've been in publishing many years and have a rolodex with personal phone numbers, addresses, and email addresses for some high profile people. I'm actively using this information to contact my friends to see if they have some project that I could acquire. Why? There is much less risk for the publisher to take a well-known author (even who has never published with you) than an unknown author and make them known. Also it involves much less work for the publisher.

Before you think there is absolutely no opportunity for an unpublished and unknown author, don't be discouraged. Publishers are looking for your work but it has to be excellent and a good fit for the needs of the particular publisher.

Five Ways to Help the Acquisitions Editor

1. For nonfiction books, write a proposal--not a manuscript. No matter how many times I say this information, I regularly meet writers who are writing their nonfiction manuscript. About 90% of nonfiction books are contracted from a book proposal. If you are writing a nonfiction manuscript then you are wasting your time. The proposal contains information about you, the market and the competition for your idea which would not be in a book manuscript. You need to work hard on your book proposal to show you're keenly aware of the market. Visualize your book. How long will it be? Where will it appear in a bookstore? What books will be beside it? (your competition). Don't tell me that you will not have any competition and your idea is unique. It is not true. Your book will compete with something else and is not totally unique. Publishers are quite jaded and roll their eyes at this common statement from new writers. What are you going to do to market and push your book into new areas for sales? This type of information has to be built into your proposal and will help it stand out from the others on the editor's desk.

2. For unpublished or newly published fiction authors, write the entire manuscript.

In general, publishers have been burned with first-time authors who only write a great summary

and a couple of well-written chapters. The publishing house contracts the novel, then the author writes the plot into a corner and can't finish the story. Suddenly, everyone is stuck with a large problem. Publishers avoid such problems and require first-time authors to write their entire fiction manuscript. This book has to sing with excellent action, drama, and characters. If it starts out slow, you will be repeatedly rejected.

3. Build a relationship with the editor. Conferences are great for these relationship building experiences. Don't try to do it on the phone (you will waste the editor's time--from their perspective). It's a huge mistake for you to call the publishing house and ask the editor how to submit your materials. You are not building a relationship. Instead you are showing your lack of professional courtesy and building a negative memory with this particular editor--because from his or her perspective you are wasting their time that should be spent elsewhere.

4. Never push for an answer about your project--except after months without a response then only inquire gently. If you push for an answer, you will get it. "No." I regularly tell authors if they want an answer about their work, I can give it immediately. "No."

It's not what they want to hear. Yes takes time. Some times lots of time. I've acquired several complex children's books, which took a year to convince a team of people they needed to publish this book and it would be financially viable to the publisher.

Yes, it took a year. From time to time I was in touch with the author to give them an update but it took patience to get these particular books published. Most writers don't have enough patience--so they push and get the answer they don't want to hear. "No." And you can completely understand it from the editor's perspective. It's easier to get rid of the nuisance calls and pushing from an author with a quick "no" against the small chance this book could turn into a bestseller. Submit your proposal simultaneously to various publishers and have patience with the lack of response. When you don't hear anything for three months or longer, then gently inquire for an "update." And instead of treading a path to your mailbox looking for an answer, get busy and write another proposal.

5. Learn how to present your proposal with excellence. Your proposal has to be written well and in the expected format. No graduation certificates are needed with your submission (yes, I've seen them). Skip the colored paper or weird fonts (yes, I've seen these as well). Leave out the fancy notebooks or costly presentation folders. These things get attention but mostly negative attention. **Always include** a Self Addressed Stamped Envelope or instructions to discard the manuscript and respond with a single stamped envelope or include an email address if the materials are rejected. Without the SASE, you have no hope of receiving a response from the publisher. Imagine receiving 6,000 to 10,000 unsolicited submissions in a year without any return postage. Imagine yourself in the role of the publishing house and consider your choice--throw the manuscript or use money from your already-tight budgets to return them. It is not hard to determine that the publisher will toss your materials and never respond. You need to study the market (something you've heard), learn how to present marketing material and yourself to be unique with well-written material. It is not easy but possible. A typical excellent nonfiction book proposal is about 15 to 20 pages--just for the proposal materials.

Your challenge (and goal) as a writer is to send an absolutely irresistible proposal to the publisher. If you follow these five basic areas, then you will separate your materials from the many other manuscripts which arrive at the same time. It will help the acquisitions editor and also improve your possibilities to be one of the few proposals which become a book.

W. Terry Whalin understands both sides of the editorial desk--as an editor and a writer. He worked as an editor for *Decision* and *In Other Words*. His magazine articles have appeared in more than 50 publications including *Writer's Digest* and *Christianity Today*. Terry has written more than 60 nonfiction books and one of his latest is [**Book Proposals That Sell, 21 Secrets To Speed Your Success**](#) (Write Now Publications). You can learn more about Terry's background at: www.right-writing.com/whalin.html. For more than 12 years Terry has been an ECPA Gold Medallion judge in the fiction category. He has written extensively about Christian fiction and reviewed numerous fiction books in publications such as *CBA Marketplace* and *BookPage*. He is the former Fiction Acquisitions Editor for Howard Books and creator of www.right-writing.com.

Sign up for Terry's free newsletter, [**Right Writing News**](#).

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An editor will respond to your manuscript in the form of an editorial letter or recommendation letter and/or in the form an electronic edit. Let's look at the editorial letter first.

Recommendations for *Lover's Lane*

How to Use These Recommendations - This letter speaks to all my developmental edits, but not necessarily to every line-edit, so please be sure to go through the manuscript page by page. The consultation includes up to two hours of follow-up phone calls and/or in-person visitation precisely because this process can raise as many questions as it provides answers. As you go through the material, please make a list of your questions for us to discuss.

Once you've reviewed the edited manuscript, read through this letter, and compile your list of questions, contact me to schedule our follow-up phone call and/or in-person meeting.

Bravo – You infuse the characters with a layer of complexity that isn't always found in urban lit, which is refreshing. Slim stands out as a male character that is authentically a gangster and family man without coming across as superficial. A plot that could have easily become a clichéd urban tale is made believable. I especially like the locations of Georgia and New Orleans instead of been-there-done-that NY or LA.

Avoid Wordiness – If you eliminate words that do not contribute to your meaning, you make every word count. Avoiding wordiness does not mean that you must write in short, choppy sentences or that you must reduce your prose to its bare bones. It does mean that every word should be necessary to your thought, because words that add nothing will obscure your meaning and bore your readers. Doing my line-editing, I tried to eliminate unnecessary words without losing the author's voice.

Setting – When reading *Lover's Lane*, the “Dirty South” setting lends much to the affect the author has created. Also, keep in mind of the season of when the story takes place. This will contribute to what the characters are wearing and the overall feel of a scene, chapter, or plot. Throughout the novel I couldn't determine what season we were in.

It also seems that the author has written this novel as if the main character is looking back in the past, maybe during the mid- to late 90s. However, the theme and situations that occur in this novel is still current issues and happening at this very moment. I would keep the effect that Slim is looking back on his life and telling the reader how he ended up on serving life in prison. However, because the issues in the story are so current and relevant I would not indicate that this story happened in the 90s, but could've happened yesterday, a week ago, a month ago, a year ago.

Opening Passage - Bookstore browsers takes into account various factors when they decide to buy a book:

- 1) cover
- 2) title

- 3) advance quotes
- 4) opening passage

Authors generally do not have contractual approval over covers; authors generally do not have contractual approval over titles; and authors cannot guarantee that a book will garner stellar advance quotes. Therefore, the only factor authors have complete control over is the opening passage.

The opening passage of *Lover's Lane* does a good job of setting up an intriguing foundation.

Character – the people who act and interact to create plot. In adult fiction we must deduce what characters are like by what they do and say, and what others say about them. Childish fiction tells you what they are like. The most convincing characters are like real persons we have observed in real life. They must be consistent—what they do should follow what they are.

Besides consistency, characters should be motivated to be *plausible* (believable). That is, the story should be concerned with what they do and *why* they do it.

Plausibility is achieved when we know the character. A good writer does not create *stick figures* that are poorly defined, *stock characters* (tall dark and handsome, etc.) or over-simplified (all good or bad) characters. The modern reader is not as naïve as his 19th century ancestor who cheered the hero (*protagonist*) and booed the villain (*antagonist*) or wept for the heroine in stage *melodramas*. We know that real human beings are more complex and are a mixture of good and evil.

With that said, the author has done an excellent job with creating complex and believable characters, which strengthens the plot. However, I felt that Trigger could have been a little more developed. The opening scene could be a perfect opportunity to give readers a “snapshot” of Slim’s and Trigger’s back-story. The author does this really well with all major characters with the exception of Trigger. While the characters do have some complexity, Trigger could benefit from being more fleshed out.

Although the characters are multidimensional, the third-person narration seems to “speak” in the same tone as Slim. The beginning starts off in third-person and then the main character, Slim, takes over the story. This is good, but there’s no distinction in voice from the narrator and Youngblood.

First person, the main character tells the story: “I did this and that.” Third person, narrator—an all-knowing observer tells the story and knows what is happening in all minds and places.

To better understand the distinction between the tone of the narrator (third person) and first person try reading any book from James Patterson’s detective series featuring Alex Cross, or Eric Jerome Dickey’s *Sleeping with Enemies* and *Waking with Strangers*, or even *A Piece of Cake* by Cupcake Brown. Although her book is written in first person, she does an excellent job of showing how a person with very little education and basically from the street goes through a serious spiritual and mental transformation.

Also, the reader should not have to “figure out” along with the author the ages of the character. The more developed the character the more of the character is revealed to the reader and the better the story will be.

p. 17 ...Mike, who was Slim’s and Trigger’s age—twenty-one or twenty-two...

p. 51 ...Another thing I thought about while sitting in that crowded prison jail cell... Sometimes it’s best to just say what’s on the character’s mind.

I’ve attached a passage from *How to Write a Selling Screenplay* by Christopher Keane as an additional method to help develop characters.

Pace – The pace of the novel moves along smoothly with suspense and twists, never knowing how this sticky situation would end. This will definitely keep readers interested enough to want to read the novel from beginning to end. My line-edit is also intended to eliminate any passages that prevent the story from moving along or sounds too preachy instead of showing the reader through action and/or dialogue.

In addition, I recommend deleting passages that digress or do not propel the plot forward.

p. 30 ...Ladies, don’t kid yourselves!

p. 34 ...the drug dealer Slim and his crew had tried to rob... The scenes that include robberies are very vivid and will stay in the reader’s mind.

p. 62 ...Niggaz was calling cars “whips” now, and I’m a young nigga that speaks mad street slang... This is the case from the very start of the novel. There’s no need to explain this now.

p. 63 ...I didn’t know I felt that way until she looked at me all suspicious like... Slim feelings toward his mother and women are very clear.

Also, there’s no need to constantly remind the reader that Tina is Slim’s baby’s mother, “My baby mama, Tina,” or that Tracey is Slim’s sister; “My sister, Tracey,” or that Kim is Tina’s mother, etc. You can state this once or twice and the reader will remember this. This will also become obvious through the characters interaction with one another.

Conflict – the struggle of opposing and almost equal forces—the protagonist (one who struggles for) and the antagonist (one who struggles against). This struggle creates suspense—lack of certainty about the outcome.

The conflict can be between a character and his inner self—*internal conflict*, or against another person or force such as nature, the sea, evil beings—*external conflict*. Conflict can be very specific, as in man vs. survival at sea, or it can be very broad as in good vs. evil. The use of symbols can be very important here.

The outcome of the struggle brings us *climax* in the plot. The suspense is ended, and *resolution* has taken place, *denouement*.

By having the opposing forces of almost equal strength, the author creates suspense, and each development in the conflict must follow logically and inevitably from the preceding development. This is called *unity*. It also creates plausibility.

Conflict in a story must be significant. The conflict should have some permanent effect on the character. His values or conception of people and life should change as a result of his experience.

Slim clearly is in battle with himself (*internal conflict*) and society (*external conflict*)—dope boys, po-po, gold digging hos, etc. Materialistic wealth symbolizes his hood status. Although money is needed to live a decent life, it also seems to be the “root of evil.” It seems whenever Slim does not have money or little of it he feels bad and becomes more violent. However, by the end of the novel he does go through a transformation and realization of the damage that he has caused to others and himself.

Plot – Plot comes from character and characters are motivated by the things they want. The point at which their desires clash is the point at which the plot forms and progresses. The resolution of the novel, or the end, is when their conflicts are resolved.

So many novelists have stated that they know they are on the right track when their characters take over. Ideally, at some point in the writing process, your characters will step off the page and say to you “No, that’s not my name, that’s not what I look like, and that’s not what I want to do. I’m going to tell the story; now shut up and type.” Your job is to get out of their way. If you find yourself saying “but that’s not what I, the author, want to do!” then you are not doing your job.

Lover’s Lane is clear and to the point. I’m sure readers will appreciate the character Queenie, Slim’s voice of reason. However, the title indicates that “no man” can be trusted, when, in fact, Slim has been “betrayed” by Tina and Rene, two women. This betrayal by his “babies’ mamas” also adds to Slim’s distaste toward women.

Dialogue and Deeds – The most effective and engaging way to tell a story is through what the characters say and what they do; in other words, through dialogue and deeds. Telling a story through the Omniscient Narrator (ON) or through Interior Monologue (IM) is far less effective. Think of it this way: if the story were a film, the ON or IM is the equivalent of the director sitting next to you in the theatre and whispering in your ear “this is what the scene really means.” If the director did his job right, the action on the screen will tell the story without need for explanation. Same thing for authors; if you do your job right, the characters’ behavior will tell the story without need for the ON or IM to step in and explain.

Many of my line-edits were done with the intention of removing the ON or IM. Below are some specific examples; this is not a comprehensive list. I highly recommend you read Elmore Leonard, who is the master of storytelling through dialogue and deeds. Anything written by him would do, but I like *La Brava*. Keep the concept of dialogue and deeds in mind as you work on the manuscript.

p. 21 Slurp. Slurp. Slurp.

p. 25 Bang! Bang! Bang!

p. 101 “Know I mean?” Try to avoid having a one-on-one conversation with the reader, especially since the reader cannot respond to and then get a response back from the character. What if the reader doesn’t know what you mean? It works best in dialogue when the character is speaking to another character. This is the same for “Feel me?”

p. 74 ...Look, dope boys get too many enemies... Resist the impulse to have the characters comment on or explain everything that’s said. Let the dialogue and action of the story do the work.

p. 176 Ya heard!

Also, be very careful quoting song lyrics. This can lead to a costly lawsuit. To play it safe, try paraphrasing the meaning of the song.

Suspense – In order to encourage the reader to turn the page, a story must have some element of suspense of “what’s going to happen next?” The enemies of suspense are the ON and IM, because they often can’t resist the compulsion to reveal that which should remain a mystery. Below are some examples.

p. 212 ...Now that I tell this story in hindsight, I don’t think of what I’ve just said caused Mike more grief...

p. 258 ...A bitch is capable of all types of betrayal...

p. 270 ...I’d been stopped fuckin’ with Trigger and wasn’t shit—need or pleasure—gonna make me change my code.

Theme – Many stories are told for pure entertainment or amusement, but serious literature contains theme. Theme is the author’s statement about life and living. Through his story, he is trying to make a statement about the nature of things.

Most of us view experience as formless and chaotic with events happening at random. The writer creates order out of the chaos and gives form to experience for the purpose of interpreting experience. He does not tell us a truth about life; he creates a set of experiences that make us feel that something is true.

For example, if in our daily life we meet an old friend whom we have not seen in years, that is a random happening that has no particular meaning. It is an accident or coincidence. If an author includes such an event in his story, we should be aware that the happening was included because it has significance. The author is structuring life to give meaning or theme to it.

Theme is not creation of a moral lesson. A *fable* with a moral seeks to reaffirm moral or ethical lessons. Themes often deal with moral or ethical issues, but they often challenge existing beliefs. An author may portray life problems that have no solution, or create a world with no moral order or purpose. In *The Lord of the Flies*, William Golding questions the goodness of mankind by portraying man as the creator of all evils in society. In short, good stories do not teach, they reveal, they do not preach, they interpret.

Thematic fiction does not exist merely to entertain; the most effective fiction is that which interprets honestly and intelligently a genuine human problem.

The author has presented a serious problem that has plagued the black community since the 1970s—drug addiction, drug related crimes, senseless violence, and the breakdown of the black family unit. However, sometimes the overuse of explaining the mentalities of the stickup kid, the dope boy, and the gold digger gets in the way of showing this on paper. I've deleted sections where I felt the author seemed to be doing more "preaching" than revealing.

Tone – the attitude of the writer toward his subject—humorous, angry, sorrowful. To miss the tone of a story is to miss the point. There is much suspense, humor, drama, and a bit of action nicely paced out in this novel. However, Slim comes off extremely bitter towards women, which stems from the betrayal of his mother and then later from Tina. His views and anger towards women stands out more than anything else.

Flashback – a device by which an author interrupts the logical time sequence of a story or play to relate an episode that occurred earlier. The flashbacks seem to appear on time and when needed, with the exception of a few places that I've indicated within the manuscript. Also, a flashback could've been used at some early point in the story to give the reader some inside knowledge about Trigger. He seems to be the only important character whose back story isn't mentioned

Foreshadowing – hints or clues of things to come. Foreshadowing is heavily done in *Native Son* by Richard Wright as a way to show things to come. In *Lover's Lane*, the author could've used foreshadowing to help better setup Tina's betrayal when Slim goes to prison by indicating that Trigger is not only jealous of Slim, but also has an interests in Tina by maybe flirting with her. The author nicely revealed Tina's character, letting us know that she cannot be trusted, especially when it comes to men with money. Also, why does Tina runs off with Trigger anyway? Is Trigger a smooth talker, has a strong influence on people, or is this just payback for Tina?

Also, toward the end, Slim becomes a rapper. Where did this come from? Maybe show him develop an interest in rapping, and music in general, while in prison. But as he becomes swept up in the streets he kind of pushes the thought of being a rapper to the side.

Ending – Few books are given a budget large enough to support advertising or tours, so most books are sold via one tried-and-true manner: word-of-mouth. The only true definition of a successful book is one that the reader reads to the very end, and then recommends to friends and colleagues. If someone buys a book but doesn't read it, it is not a success; likewise, if someone buys a book, reads it, but isn't inspired enough to recommend it, it is not a success. As such, the

ending of a book must inspire the reader to immediately recommend it to everyone she sees, or the book will not succeed.

The ending needs work. Mostly because it seems that the author doesn't know how to put down the pen and close the book. The ending should provide the best kind of twist—one that is unexpected yet wholly believable. This is the case when Slim finds out that it was his most loyal friend, Tim, who turns him in. However, this doesn't come until page 600.

For a small/independent publisher to invest in a manuscript that's six hundred pages is a costly gamble. There just aren't any guarantees in the publishing business. Because of the manuscripts length, I strongly recommend that the author make *Lover's Lane* a two-part series. This would not only be more economically effective for the publisher, but it would also give the author an opportunity to build his audience and a platform.

Following the lead of Eric Jerome Dickey's *Sleeping With Enemies* and *Waking With Strangers*, making two books out of *Lover's Lane* can work. Book One should end when Slim is shot and presumed dead. Book Two should end when Slim is eventually taken down by the FBI. However, Book Two should be released no later than six months after Book One.

The "letters to and from prison" is not fully developed. This is not how you tell a story by using letters. It's as if the author attached letters to the back of the manuscript as a way to answer readers' questions. The author should do some research by reading works by others who successfully told stories through the use of a diary and/or letters. I recommend reading *Suzanne's Diary for Nicholas* by James Patterson.

Book Two would definitely have to reveal who shot Slim and why. It doesn't have to explain what happened to Rene. This could be left for the reader to ponder, debate, and/or discussed amongst others who've read the story. Also, the author should consider either clearly revealing who killed Trina and why or leaving it to the reader to "assume" that Mike had something to do with it.

Clarification – There are a few points in the narrative that need clarification. Below are some examples.

p. 11 I wasn't sure if the woman during the first "lick" name is Wifey or the author was simply identifying her as James's wife or the slang term some men use to label the woman their involved with.

p. 12 Where is this suburban house, city/state, during the first "lick."

p. 80 Does Tina and her siblings have the same father?

Slim preaches throughout the novel that "niggaz don't keep it real" and how he live by certain principles by not crossing certain boundaries or people. What makes him go against his belief of not killing a former employer when he attempts to kill Mike? I understand Slim battles with this, but I'm not sure if he goes along with his "assassination" of Mike out of fear from the Mexicans or he honestly felt that Mike crossed him by dating his sister. If that's the case, why not be mad at the sister for pulling him into her drama?

Repetition – Avoid using the same or similar descriptive words repeatedly in a single passage. I tried to catch this during my line-edit.

Basics – Avoid using the word “and” and “though” at the beginning of sentences.

Avoid the phrases “I felt” or “I thought.” If a passage is told from the POV of a particular character, it is assumed that he or she is doing the feeling and thinking.

Avoid the phrase “That was when” or “When I think back.” The entire narrative is told in chronological order, obviating the need to point out to the reader that events occur sequentially.

For dialogue, use “said” instead of “told him” or “told her.” It falls better on the eye and ear.

Don’t say a character “nodded her head yes” or “shook his head no.” Nodding by definition is the movement of the head up and down in order to indicate assent, so saying a person nodded yes is redundant. Just say “nodded” or “shook head”.

Slim said to himself, this would be either internal thought (he thought it) or he said it out loud. Also, saying, He himself, is redundant. I understand that majority of the language is not supposed to be correct English, but hisself is just wrong; unless this is the intention of the author and is a representation of the character.

Writing a book generally requires a significant investment of time. It’s like running a marathon: it takes years of training and the one way to learn how to do it is by doing it. While a coach can help with your training, only you can do the actual running. Similarly, while an editor can help with your craft, only you can do the actual writing.

Bottom Line – There is much potential in your work, but there is also some work to be done, as writing is really all about rewriting.

Electronic Editing

Electronic Editing is done by using the Track Change feature in Microsoft Word. An author can simply go through the manuscript and reject or accept the editor’s editorial markings and comments. This is how it would appear.

~~Camille Smith~~

CHAPTER ONE

~~Today~~ Camille ~~Smith~~ wished she could ~~have~~ ~~stay~~ed in the damn bed, but no, ~~she~~ had to put on her game face and get beautified. ~~She guessed~~ ~~that~~ This was the life she chose, unlike most bitches,

who let the life choose them. She definitely ran shit. Yes, indeed, she was cut from a different cloth. These bitches in the game were faux fur while Camille was Chinchilla.

She was loving Cleveland, [Ohio](#).

It's so different from Brooklyn, [New York](#). She thought as she lay in bed [channel surfing](#). She could tell Cleveland wasn't as rough. None-the-less, shit popped off here too. ~~When~~ She ~~came across~~ ~~looked at~~ *Nineteen Action* news [and as they reported](#), all hell broke loose at a club called The Baby Grand.

“Damn! All in the same night,” she said ~~aloud to herself~~.

As ~~the~~ news reporter [stated that said](#) a man shot two men, had a hit and run with a seventy-three-year-old woman, who happened to be prostituting her fourteen year old granddaughter, all [the](#) while pushing her one-year-old great granddaughter in an umbrella stroller.

“At least the baby is okay,” [she thought](#) ~~Camille said to herself~~.

That was some crazy shit if she ain't ever heard of none. She switched the channel when George W. Bush ~~ass~~ started talking. Not that she didn't like him, ~~actually~~ she kind of respected him in some sick twisted way. To her, the two of them had one major thing in common: He fucked over as many niggas as he could and so did she.

Seeking A Literary Agent

Let me say this in plain English. **YOU DO NOT NEED A LITERARY AGENT TO SUBMIT YOUR MANUSCRIPT TO A PUBLISHER.** Yes, an agent may help your chances at reaching many acquisition editors at major publishing housing, but it doesn't limit your chances of getting published. Don't rule out the smaller/independent publishing housing as an option to submit your literary works to. There are many authors who were able to land publishing deals without an agent. The only setback is that not all authors, especially the novice author, know much about the business side of publishing. If you don't have an agent please consult with an attorney that specializes in publishing law.

I asked an author friend of mine, Zipporah Thelmon, to share with you her experience with seeking a literary agent.

Zipporah Z. Thelmon <pisces14@mybluelight.com> was born in 1981 in North Philadelphia to a North Carolinian mother and an Arkansan father. She is a Black American with a heritage of Cherokee Indian, Hispanic, Scotch-Irish and German bloodlines. She is the youngest of four sisters and three brothers, an aunt to seven nieces and nephews and a great-great aunt to a great-great nephew.

Zippy, as she is called for short, is a college senior continuing studies in Creative Writing, English Literature. She is a graduate of John W. Hallahan High School and has an Associates Degree in Liberal Arts from the Community College of Philadelphia.

She lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and author of the novel *The Very Eye*.

With that said, let's see what Zipporah has to say.

Tips For Submitting to Literary Agencies

When literary agencies say that your book is not right for them, they have their own categories of books they are interested in that publishers want to publish. Submit to agents that specialize in the book that you have written. 20's –Young adult/adult. It also depends on what the book is about. Children's books and young adult books are different categories.

Keep your synopsis (a summary of your book from beginning to end) in one page or at least two. When writing it, do not include subplots, just the basic parts that are connected to the plot.

Keep your query letter to one page and a three sentence plot summary. Write about the character's emotions. Do not tell what other people said about your novel since agents read it as self-praise and makes negative reactions for them. Ask agents if they will refer you to an agent or knows one that accepts your type of book if they themselves reject your book.

Include a writing resume (called a CV, which stands for Curriculum Vitae; some agents use it in their advertisements) on a separate page; do not include it in the query. If you are in college, write for magazines or newspapers or enter writing contests, those are your writing experiences. It is also all right to tell that you are a beginner and submitting your first novel.

Ask permission to e-mail your submission if you want to save time and money to agents who advertise that they can only accept submissions by post.

DO NOT submit to agents who ask for money upfront since they are *not supposed* to charge *any* fees. They make money when you do; their job is to send your book to a publisher who will pay for the cost of getting it on the market and receiving a commission after it sells.

Websites and books for legal agencies

1. Writer's Beware
<http://www.inthecompanyofwriters.com/writersbeware.htm>
2. <http://www.sfwaweb.org/beware/index.html>
3. Publishersmarketplace.com
4. The 2008 Novel and Short Story Writer's Market
5. 2009 Novel and Short Story Writer's Market
6. Jeff Herman's Guide to Book Publishers, Editors, and Literary Agents 2008 Edition.
7. You can also write to veteran authors for help who write books in your category. Ask if you can submit sample material to them for review and then refer it to their agent. Look for their contact addresses online or in the back of their books. Check for their agents as well. Many authors thank their agents in their acknowledgments. Call local bookstores to find out if the agencies' clients' books are on their shelves. Do not deal with agents who get bad attitudes when asking them questions about their business. After all, you don't want your hard work to be lost.
8. Literary Agents –<http://www.writers-publish.com/literary-agents.html>

Do not limit yourself to agents just in America. Try overseas; especially Japan, England, or Europe.

American Agents –The Agent List –<http://www.katfeete.net/writing/agents.html>

Websites for foreign agents

1. http://www.wordsmitten.com/diana_interview.htm -An Interview with Diana Finch Ellen Levine and Trident Media Group. Diana talks about foreign publishers.

British agencies

Associations of Authors' Agents –

http://www.agentsassoc.co.uk/index.php/Directory_of_Members

1. http://www.agentsassoc.co.uk/index.php/Directory_of_Members
2. http://www.jbwb.co.uk/ukagentsa_1.htm
3. http://www.kraytek.com/literary_agents_-uk.htm

UK literary agents who specialize in science fiction and fantasy –Science Fiction Fantasy –
<http://www.sffchronicles.co.uk/forum/8887-uk-literary-agents-who-specilise-in-science-fiction-fantasy.com>

nHouse Publishing, LLC

The Synopsis Literary Agency –<http://www.synopsis-agency.co.uk/English/e-contacts.htm>

Japanese Agencies

http://www.finstitute.gr.jp/events/reports/reports_in_full.html

The Writers' Union of Canada

[File://C:\DOCUME~1\OWNER\LOCALS~1\Temp\OF0VZY1Z.htm](file://C:\DOCUME~1\OWNER\LOCALS~1\Temp\OF0VZY1Z.htm)

Russian Agency –Goumen&Smirnova

http://www.gs-agency.com/about_en.php

French agency –Pierre Astier & Associates Literary and Film Agency –

<file://C:\DOCUME~1\Owner\LOCALS~1\Temp\KWCBBHCU.htm>

Spanish Agency –Ute Korner Literary Agent, S.L. –

http://www.uklitag.com/site/contact_new.php

Irish Agencies –http://www.writersco.com/_Irish%20Literary%20agents

German Agencies

1. Michael Meller Literary Agency Gmbh –

<http://www.melleragency.com/en/kontakt.html?leng=en&open=9>

2. Autoren and Management –http://autoren-management.de/autorenmanagement_top.htm

Editors do not rewrite your book; just tell you what parts need rewriting.

Tools

An active imagination

Notebooks

Pens/pencils

A computer and/or laptop

A USB flash drive

A positive attitude

A dictionary

Be prepared to receive rejection letters, but don't give up. Keep writing until an agent says they want to represent your literary work. After all, new writers are introduced everyday. Publishing is a competitive business. It is like a grocery store for people to pick and choose what they like.

Thanks so much for that valuable information, Zippy.

Cover Letter to Literary Agent

Zipporah Thelmon
(author's contact info)

Date

Agent's name
Agency
Address
City, State and Zip Code

Dear Agent,

Please consider reviewing a novel that I have completed concerning another job that a twenty-two-year-old American Black clinical psychologist/artist woman named Dr. Javanna (pronounced Juh-vahn-nuh) Bach who lives in Manhattan gets when given mythical powers to rescue the world's money mints from renovators that capture them. Entitled *The Collection Key*, the manuscript is written entirely in third-person and is a mixture of art, clinical psychology, history, technology, mythology, geography, symbolism and affect-and-cause mystery. This book is a fantasy book. The language is modern and often humorous, yet serious. The book is, however, a timely expose on a young female who becomes her country's secret guardian based on an American myth; only she does not have to wear a disguise.

The manuscript is divided into three stages of Dr. Bach's new job: Her life in Manhattan and a dangerous phenomenon that subsequently leads to her coming home to her native Jenkintown, PA, an initiation that involves people from France, Russia, China and England and an overseas trip where the phenomenon's connections are operating.

I have enclosed the disposable synopsis, CV and first (number of pages or chapters) of my thirty-six chapter manuscript. Please notify me if you are interested in reviewing my complete text for possible publishing considerations. I have also enclosed an SASE for your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Zipporah Thelmon

Zipporah's CV

I am a new fiction writer writing my third novel in the Dr. Javanna Bach fantasy series, have a Liberal Arts Associates degree and am a senior English Literature major working in my BA degree.

My favorite genres are:

Fiction

Dark fantasy (especially vampires and werewolves)

Traditional fantasy,

Romantic comedy,

Mythology

Mystery

Horror

Thriller

Action/Adventure

Nonfiction

Self-help

Herbal

Literacy

Biography

Synopsis for *The Collection Key* by Zipporah Thelmon

Ghislain Schlitz, Alfonso Falk, Monterey Waldvogel, Hans Ritcher, Gregory Vogt, Oliver Metzger, Tiberio Hafner, Ross Zimmerman, Adam Koch, Nicholas Mohren, Eckart Leverenz, Usmar Schafer, Volker Fleisher and Karl Geisler are renovators plotting to help a dead demon, who put chaos on Earth to conquer it and has now returned do so again. Ghislain destroys the demon's story that is in the American mythology book. They resurrect five single women; Valar Becker, Odyssey Gallup, Barrette Knapp, Pollen Werden and Quilot Cuyler for more help.

Vigilante is a watchdog peace sign that visits Auburn McClain, Dr. Bach's maternal grandmother, to tell her that the demon is back but does not know where he is; only he senses him. The people from Russia, France, China and England are Auburn's friends and their relatives: Latimer Corot and his niece, Oasis Bourbon who is French President Timothy Liore's deputy general secretary, Ecafrom Wilcox, a British man and his pharmacist brother, Ferrex, Shing Zhao, a Chinese man and his barber cousin, Ru Wang, Sadine Berezin, a Russian woman and her welder nephew, Thaddeus Gorki. Out of Vigilante step a male bald eagle, a female unicorn, a lion, a male bear, a female panda and a rooster that are the five countries' immortal national symbols. The demon's story is gone from Auburn's mythology book, which upsets her and she only remembers his name, which is Razaar. Vigilante gives the relatives powers. Dr. Bach gets an e-mail invitation from the Liores' to treat Pierre, their oldest child, who is having nightmares and to paint Liore's parents' wedding portrait for Adele, his widow mother. It will be his gift for her surprise birthday banquet. The renovators and the women capture the Chinese, British and Russian leaders' children. Owen Raspberry, the American president, and his administration discuss making a weapon to stop future tyrant attacks. Secretary of Commerce, Juan Sanchez recommends Chad, Dr. Bach's engineer brother. Chad makes blueprints for a plane named LY-73 and a computer chip. Raspberry shows Chad the money mint, which is a medium-sized white diamond. Raspberry is going to Paris for a United Nations Summit meeting.

Raspberry calls Dr. Bach to deliver the plane's blueprints. She goes on the Continental Cruise ship to Paris. Chilton Pasteur, the Liores' chauffeur, takes her to Elysee Palace.

Dr. Bach accepts a date from Esfonio Giovanni, the Liores' nephew. They tour the capital by horse and carriage. As they leave downtown, a gargoyle casts lightning on it. A blue orb goes through the creature. Dr. Bach and Esfonio escape to a park. The gargoyle catches up with them, pulls up Pepe Monet, their driver, casts blue electricity on Pepe and drops him. Dr. Bach drives the carriage underneath Pepe and Esfonio catches him. He calls the rescue squad. The gargoyle then returns. As it flies away again, a third orb kills the creature. When they are back at Elysee Palace, everyone is relieved that they are alive. Prunella and Zan who are Esfonio's parents, and Yvette, his sister, stay the night. On the United Nations Summit meeting day, the Liore children and Cascade Raspberry, the first daughter, have been kidnapped. Raspberry and Liore still go to the UN Summit meeting at Versailles Palace. The renovators and the women appear on a monitor with the children. Ghislain makes the renovators' demands, which are: to break the six symbols' statues, the LY-73, computer chip, the Trappers want Washington DC for their headquarters and the UN leaders are to turn in their residences' keys. One person is to deliver them in order to save the children. Dr. Bach finds out that Razaar is a demon. Esfonio drives Dr. Bach to Versailles. Raspberry wants to send the LY-73 to rescue her and the children. They argue until a distraction stops it and enables Dr. Bach to exit. An army truck takes her to the

renovators. Raspberry calls the driver to return. The plane comes to rescue them. The renovators and the women escape. Ghislain tells the UN that they will steal each country's money mint as payment for tricking them. The new guardians and their symbols kill the women in their countries' capitals and return to Paris to fight the renovators who has the money mints at the Louvre.

MAINSTREAM VS. SELF-PUBLISHING

Pros and Cons of Mainstream and Self-Publishing

by [C. Liegh McInnis](#)

(Updated February 2007)

C. Liegh McInnis is an instructor of English at Jackson State University and an author of six books. His work has appeared in [Dialogue](#), CloseUP, [Fyah.Com](#), the Jackson Advocate, and the Clarion Ledger. He is a co-editor of *Diaspora Quarterly* and a poetry/fiction reviewer for *Multi-Cultural Review*. He can be reached through *Psychedelic Literature*, P.O. Box 3085, Jackson, MS 39207, 1725topp@bellsouth.net

There are two basic routes to getting published, mainstream and self-publishing. Mainstream is when you submit your work to a publishing company to have them publish it. Self-publishing is when you decide to publish your own books. They both can be equally effective although the mainstream manner is the most respected because it has an aura or illusion of validation. Where self-publishing does not offer the validation from the establishment, it offers a satisfaction of artistic and economic control of one's work.

Mainstream:

Again, the mainstream route is when you are hoping to strike a book deal with an established publisher. The cons of publishing using the mainstream route are: 1) most larger publishers do not accept unsolicited manuscripts from writers without an agent, 2) the larger publishers usually require writers to sign over their rights to the material for some period of time, usually anywhere from two to five years, 3) even though one may have a deal with a major publisher, it is still required of that author to schedule readings and signings across the country, and 4) most first time authors earn only ten - fifteen percent of the profits of the book. The pros of publishing using the mainstream route are: 1) because they are established (ingrained into the minds of the reading and buying public) there is an innate sense of acceptability and validation of the writer and the work and 2) one has the mega-machine behind him which allows one's books to be placed in bookstores across the country as well as gain entrance into "so-considered" prestigious organizations and societies.

Most writers embrace the mainstream route because it frees them to be creative, or so they think. Although one is always responsible for promoting one's own books, publishing with an established publisher accesses one to roads, connections, and certain avenues, such as book clubs and other literary societies and organizations which wish to only deal with authors who have been validated by the establishment. Self-published authors are often left outside or are locked out of these organizations or societies. Again, the established publisher represents, ideally, immediate access to mass markets and elite persons and organizations. In reality, most writers, even after acquiring these mainstream deals, still find themselves having to pound the pavement to sell their books. So, validation is the major pro for publishing with an established publisher.

This validation is important if one plans to make a career as a college or university professor. If this is one's pursuit, then the importance of accredited and validated research must

be realized. One of my mentors, Dr. Reginald Martin, professor of English at the University of Memphis and editor of the best-selling anthology *Dark Eros*, puts it this way.

“If you’re in the scholarly writing game, it is not only validation that you receive by being published by a commercial publisher; it is also job perks and being allowed to keep the job. This is very important for younger black scholars to understand. Walt Whitman’s self-publishing of [*Leaves of Grass*](#) (1843) would still be the great book it is, but if Whitman were a professor, he’d get kicked out of his job because only peer review and publishing by a large house matters to a university. This is wrong, and you can easily see how this will only re-create the same boring material and ideas, but that’s the way it is” (Martin 1999).

Most established publishers like Random House, St. Martin’s Press, etc., will not accept unsolicited manuscripts from writers who do not have agents. So, often times one will find oneself submitting to agents in the very same manner that one will submit to a publisher. Before any writer submits to a publisher or an agent, a writer must first subscribe to and submit to local, regional, national, and international journals. Journals are a way by which a writer is able to gain a feel for what is going on in the field or a particular genre, hone his skills, and submit, hoping that even in rejection one will gain some type of feedback. A writer should also submit one’s work to various emerging and established writers. They, of course, will have very demanding schedules which will not allow them to respond to every inquiry, but I have found that most will take the time to send you some comments about your work if you include a SASE. Also, attempt to identify persons working in the field as critics or scholars. You will usually find these individuals through journals and university presses. That is, identify certain colleges, universities, or writing programs and send your work to them. The feedback you receive from journals and other writers will allow you to measure your talent and growth as a writer and will also act as marketing tools when you do approach an agent or a publisher. It is always an added plus to be able to say that you should publish me because my work has been hailed by this renowned scholar, critic, or artist. This makes journals and publishers sit up and take notice. In fact, I would suggest that a beginning writer work the journal circuit for about two years before submitting their work to an agent or a publisher.

Another interesting trend is the manner in which established publishers are looking to independent or self-published writers. That is, once a writer has proven that he can sell a certain amount of books by pounding the pavement, often larger publishing houses come-a-calling. So, self-publishing is no longer just an avenue for writers who want to own and control their work and ideas. Self-publishing is now a very viable vehicle which allows writers to gain the attention of larger publishers.

Self-Publishing:

The pros of self-publishing are: 1) Not having to wait to be validated which is important if you are doing something that is not being regularly marketed, 2) controlling what you write, when you write, and how often you write, and 3) being able to directly reap the artistic and economic benefits of your hard work of pounding the pavement. The cons of self-publishing

are: 1) publishing work when, as an artist, one may not be ready or well-crafted and 2) the money that one has to front.

Self-publishing is a good idea if the writer has a balanced and level head, which is driven by a desire to produce well-crafted work and not driven by the desire to just publish or to gain stardom. A person who self-publishes must create a system of checks and balances so that his work is not guided by a self-absorbed ego. This, I submit, is the most difficult task of self-publishing, being objective, if such a thing is possible, about one's own work. Thus, the self-published writer must continuously identify and engage writers and critics whom he respects. So, even when self-publishing, a writer is always submitting work to someone other than oneself.

Self publishing is expensive. It is expensive to publish your books, and it is expensive to continue to re-print older books while at the same time publish new work. And the expenses do not stop there. Once a book is published, you have the responsibility for delivering complimentary copies all across the planet which can be anywhere from thirty to one hundred and fifty complimentary copies which must be included in your budget, not to mention postage for all of this. To distribute thirty complimentary copies at three dollars a pop is ninety dollars. Bulk mail helps, but it is not as helpful as one may assume.

An added issue is when authors wish to have illustrations within the text of the book. Photos, of course, do increase the cost of printing. Ordinarily, printers charge somewhere in the area of seven and thirty-five cents per page, depending on the quality of the paper and the quantity of the copies. (A high volume order of books decreases the price.) Color copies can increase the cost of copying a page to the range of one dollar to one dollar and fifty cents per page, again depending upon the quality of the paper and the quantity of the copies. Black and white copies are a bit different. If you are attempting to get a high gloss looking black and white, then the printer will shoot it with a laser printer or copier (the same method as color) and will charge you the same amount as a color. If you are able to reproduce those black and white illustrations by way of a standard copier, then it should not increase the cost at all, since the printer does not have to do any additional work. Of course, always ask. Here is the general rule of thumb. No matter what you need done in your books, always try to pay no more than three to four dollars per book. This, of course, keeps your price for the book down. Three should really be your limit, and you are probably going to have to get about 500 copies minimum to get a cost of three dollars or lower.

Even though I was not ready, not as well-crafted as I needed to be, self-publishing allowed me to gain the attention of some folk who would say, "Most of this stinks, but there are some moments here that let me know that you seem to have talent." With hindsight being twenty-twenty, I should have worked the journal circuit more, even if I was going to self-publish. Even if one is going to self-publish, one needs to gain feedback from journals, university scholars, and critics as well as established creative writers. This is important because a self-published writer will need some validation from somewhere else since he will not be validated by the larger publishers.

What is this validation of which I keep speaking, those little comments on the back of books that tell a potential reader, “Hey, buy this book; it’s good.” The real fact of the matter is that we live in a society where most readers must have new writers validated by someone else before they will pick up the work. Well, word of mouth is always the best advertisement. It can make you or break you. These comments that you will be receiving from various members of the writing community will help to propel your work into a larger reading.

Yet, it must be realized early in one’s endeavors that this validation sought by a self-published author will be difficult to find. Further, Dr. Martin lets us know that “even if you self publish, the general rule for reviews is that no organization will review the book unless it also came out in hard cover. Again, this is silly, but this is the current state of trying to get a book reviewed by most southern journals and any large media outlet” (Martin 1999). Also, most large or more notable journals and periodicals tend not to review unsolicited work. Most self-published authors must hope that their work makes enough noise in the smaller periodicals that larger, more noted journals will be called to the work’s attention.

Again, when one is self-publishing, everything is his responsibility. But no matter which road you chose, always copyright your own work. If some one publishes your work, you can give them permission to use your work, but the copyright allows you to retain all the rights. I tend to copyright all my work about every six months. Others wait and copyright only their complete manuscripts. As a rule of thumb, I never submit work to anyone that is not copyrighted. You obtain your copyright from the Library of Congress, Copyright Office, 101 Independence Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20559-6000. Or, you can go online and print a form at <http://www.copyright.gov/forms/formtxi.pdf>. It costs forty-five dollars per copyright. That is forty-five dollars to copyright one poem or forty-five dollars to copyright a collection of poems. That is why every six months I copyright a collection of work.

One issue that always arises is when self-published authors submit or allow their work to be included in anthologies. Generally, when a publisher applies for a copyright of an anthology, he is applying for a copyright for the entire work in the name of the publisher. What his copyright covers is the work as a whole. That is, his copyright only covers the works inasmuch as they are collected and compiled to create one cohesive work, allowing the author to retain all rights to present, submit, or sell his individual piece. The rule is, if you have a copyright of a work and do not sign it away, then the work remains yours until you sign something giving that right to someone else. The only problem that can arise is if you do not already have the piece copyrighted before the publisher applies for a copyright for the anthology. Yet, unless you sign something specifically giving the rights of your work to someone, then your rights are covered. There can only be a problem if a publisher wishes to claim that your work was done as work for hire. That is, you specifically produced a certain work to be used by the publisher for a particular publication. In this case, it will be best that you had your work copyrighted. Here again, as long as you do not sign away your rights then you are protected. The publisher’s copyright covers the anthology as a whole, but you still retain the rights of your work.

Once you have your copyright and your reviews or comments, it is time to put your work into book form. This means finding a printer and acquiring ISBN (International Series Book Number) and LCCN (Library of Congress Catalogue Number) numbers. An ISBN is the social

security number of a book. It allows your book to be tracked and sold anywhere on the planet. The LCCN is the social security number of your book for the world library systems. It allows your book to be tracked and loaned through any library system on the planet. To receive an ISBN write to R. R. Bowker (U.S. ISBN Agency), 630 Central Ave., New Providence, NJ 07974-1154, Phone: 877-310-7333, info@bowker.com, or go to <https://commerce.bowker.com/standards/cgi-bin/isbn.asp>. You can complete the form online or print the application and mail it. Ten ISBNs cost \$269.95, 100 ISBNs cost \$914.95, 1000 ISBNs cost \$1429.95, and 10,000 ISBNs cost \$3949.95. R. R. Bowker will assign the numbers to the entity you list under company name. You can not transfer or sell the numbers to anyone else. If you do a joint project with someone, your ISBNs must still be listed to your named entity, or you and your partner must apply for an ISBN jointly. Because most if not all retailers require that books have a bar code, there is a place to order a specific bar code for a specific ISBN on the ISBN application. 1 – 5 bar codes cost \$25.00, 6 – 10 bar codes cost \$23.00, and 11-100 bar codes cost \$21.00. Also, as of January 1, 2005 the book industry began adopting the use of a 13-digit ISBN. This change aligns the ISBN identifier with other worldwide product numbering systems, helping promote an efficient global supply chain structure. All books must be compliant with the new 13-digit ISBN by 2007. If you already have an ISBN, you can get it converted for free at <http://www.isbn.org/toolkit.html>. If you are applying for your first ISBN, you will be automatically given a 13-digit ISBN.

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about \$150.00 to \$300 in postage to send complimentary copies to journals, writers, and friends. You need to set aside about 100 copies for promo. Book clubs are fine, but they generally only read and review fiction and essay. They tend not to read much poetry.

Writing is like all other professions. You must be a student of the trade. This means that you need to get a subscription or two in order to see what is out there, what is being published, and what are the current conversations/issues of the field. This helps you grow as a writer. One should also join some regularly meeting workshop. A good writing workshop stresses reading and writing activities and exercises that force you outside of your comfort zone, which forces you to challenge yourself and grow. There are several online workshops that can also be used to supplement one's local workshop. An excellent online workshop is deGriot Space, which is facilitated by Askhari. For information to join, contact her at deGriotSpace-owner@yahoogroups.com or <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/deGriotSpace>.

A good reference point for workshops, conferences, publications, and journals is a free listserv operated by [Kalamu ya Salaam](#). He is an institution within the institution of writing. Kalamu ya Salaam is one of the driving voices behind the African American Southern Literary scene. Salaam's work includes the spoken word CD *My Story, My Song* (AFO Records) and his latest book *What Is Life?* (Third World Press). To join, simply e-mail him at Kalamu@aol.com. He has a cyberdrum network by which he sends e-mails to anyone on the list about magazines, book companies, journals, conferences, and other publishers who are looking for writers to submit their work. You will get about ten daily e-mails on submissions and discussions around the country.

Next, subscribe to at least two literary journals. One should be very academic and the other should be very culturally astute and wise so that you get the best of both worlds. Academic journals focus on the form, genre, and structure of writing. Culturally artistic journals focus on the amalgamation of form and culture. Subscribing to both types of journals allows you to grow in various areas. Do not worry if many of the articles look intimidating. You need to know theory (elements of literature) to write well or effectively. I use *Callaloo* (\$40 yearly, Johns Hopkins University Press, Journals Publishing Division, 2715 North Charles Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21218-4363, 410-516-6987) as my academic journal and *Mosaic Magazine* (\$15.00 yearly, 314 W 231 St #470, Bronx, NY 10463, mosaicmagazine.org) as my cultural journal. *African American Review* (Department of English, Saint Louis University, Humanities 317, 3800 Lindell Blvd., St. Louis, MO 63108) is also a very well established scholarly journal. A final journal to which I subscribe is *Black Issues Book Review* (\$19.95 yearly, 350 Fifth Ave., Suite 1522, New York, NY 10118).

I am not suggesting that one rush out and get all these journals. But, I want young writers to understand that writing is more than what we feel. You may feel or think something, but you need to develop the tools to articulate specifically and effectively what it is that you are thinking and/or feeling. Even if you may have good ideas and tools, you must get to work developing them. No matter what road a writer chooses to follow, only well-crafted writing will get a writer where he wants to go.

There are four additional books that all beginning African American writers should have in their possession: *The Norton Anthology of African American Literature* edited by [Henry Louis Gates, Jr.](#), *Trouble the Water* and *Black Southern Writers* both edited by Dr. Jerry W. Ward, and *Call and Response* edited by Dr. Trudier Harris. These four anthologies give you a cohesive understanding of the African American literary cannon. They also give you an idea of how the publishing of African American literature has changed and evolved. Specifically, these anthologies show how self-publishing and small/independent publishing have always been a part of the African American publishing tradition and how it remains a necessary mainstay.

As for self-publishing, I am broke but happy. I own my work. I control my work. I work at my own pace, which is cool since I know that I will work harder at selling my books than anyone else. [Nikki Giovanni](#) began as a self-published author, riding around with books in her trunk. Third World Press, which is now a major publishing force, began with [Haki Madhubuti](#) selling single poems at a barber shop. [Gwendolyn Brooks](#) and [Amiri Baraka](#) both have been visible and consistent supporters of independent and self-publishing. Self-publishing has been a major vehicle for African American writers who have been and are still very much locked out of the mainstream media. Self-publishing and independent publishing appeals to many African Americans whose voices and subject matters have been and remain contradicting to mainstream publishing. When African American writers have needed a tool to raise their voices about their situation in American and that voice was no longer en vogue, self-publishing and independent publishing remained as excellent vehicles, ensuring that all voices will be given the opportunity to be heard.

Bibliography

Martin, Reginald. "Personal Interview." Spring, 1999.

Pricing

According to Avery Cardoza's "The Complete Guide to Successful Publishing," the price of a book is set at a minimum of five times of the production cost. The unit print cost is estimated at \$2.00 for a first press of 10,000 copies. Therefore, the list price should be between \$10.00 and \$15.00.

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Author Tours, Appearances, and Mini-Seminars

Author tours not only help build interest in their literary works, but also give the audience the feeling that they have taken a piece of the author home with them. A new title should be publicized three months prior to its released date and three months after. Once a new title is released, the author is expected to tour selective cities that may support the author and their literary works. Tours can also be organized in the form of a mini-seminar where many topics related with their literary work could be discussed.

These topics as they are discussed in the book can be tied into recent events, the community, or an issue that engages the audience.

Book Expos

Book expos are an opportunity for authors to stay on top of the trend, to network within the industry, and to increase exposure to wider wholesale markets such as mass merchandisers and discount retailers. It also offers an opportunity to generate interest in a new release, and position an author within the industry. BookExpo America features over 1,200 publishers, including all major U.S. publishing houses, university presses, international publishers, and small presses. Therefore, there are also chances to understand competition. The Harlem Book Fair is another major book event where authors can display and sell their literary work.

Distribution

Distribution is the selling, warehousing, and fulfilling of customers' orders; getting the product out to the customer. In addition with working with distributors and wholesalers, such as Baker & Taylor, A&B Books, African World Distributors, Street Knowledge Books, Black and Noble Books, Lusheena Books, the author can deal directly with local bookstore owners.

Book Clubs

According to Book Industry Study Group, the annual revenue of the book publishing industry is \$25 billion, among which 17.7% are sold through book clubs. Book clubs are also actively giving reviews of new releases. Therefore, being selected by a book club can give your title a stamp of approval, increasing visibility, boosting initial sales and long-term earnings. There are three ways that an author could work with this channel:

- Sell titles directly to book clubs at discounted prices;
- Print at the requests of the book clubs;
- Ask book clubs to join the next print run, paying for printing cost and royalty.

Overall Channel Structure

Eventually, NHP will develop a comprehensive distribution network that includes book clubs, bookstores, mass merchandisers, discount stores, gift shops, libraries, and street vendors.

Returns

There is a 30% industry return rate. NHP plans to handle returns by selling them at a discounted price at book expos, cultural and social events that would have an interest in such given titles.

And with that said....

THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

RESOURCES

We welcome you with open arms and would love for you to be a part of our journey toward success and much adventure in the publishing business. But most of all, you have to have a passion and desire for writing and publishing. To assist you in your journey listed below is comprehensive information about the publishing industry, complete with contact information and tools to help you publish your book and succeed.

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Tim Dilli

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ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION SOURCES

These professional organizations and associations offer activities specifically for self-publishers and e-publishers.

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These books are available at your local or online bookstores.

The Chicago Manual of Style, 15th Edition:

The Essential Guide for Writers, Editors, and Publishers

By University of Chicago Press Staff (University of Chicago Press, \$55.00 hardcover)

www.press.uchicago.edu/

The Self-Publishing Manual

How to Write, Print and Sell Your Own Book

By Dan Poynter (Para Publishing, \$19.95 paperback)

www.parapublishing.com

How to Succeed in the Publishing Game

Vickie Stringer reveals the secrets to her success in publishing

By Vickie Stringer, Mia McPherson (Triple Crown Publications, \$20.00

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How to Write a Selling Screenplay

A step-by-step approach to developing your story and writing your screenplay by one of today's most successful screenwriters and teachers.

By Christopher Keane (Broadway Books, \$14.95 paperback)

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STORY

Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting.

By Robert McKee (HarperCollins Publishers, \$35.00 hardcover)

www.harpercollins.com

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Everything you need to know to Write, Publish, Promote and Sell Your Own Book

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