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For Immediate Release

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Author - Frequently Asked Questions

Title: Oaktown Devil

Author: Renay Jackson

1. How did your writing career begin?

A: Seven years ago my one of my daughters was beginning middle school. Her English assignment on the first day was to tell what she did the previous summer. Her paper read: "This summer we went swimming. We had fun." In an attempt to explain descriptive writing to her, I described myself washing a car. Once she understood I just kept on writing, calling it my short story. Every day I would hurry home and work on my project and by chapter four, knew I could write a book. No one believed me because none of us knew anyone who had accomplished such a task.

2. When did you feel like you were an author?

A: One day while outside a bookstore I was asked to autograph my book. It was then that I felt like I was a legitimate author.

3. How were you so successful as a self-published author?

A: First, I parlayed all the knowledge gained from my rap career and used it in the book world. The system was similar to what Master P did with Priority Records; Hammer with Bust It; Russell Simmons with Profile; Too \$hort, P Diddy, Queen Latifah, Will Smith...the list goes on and on. What you do is sell as many units as you can, then hope somebody notices. If successful, you go nationwide. Second, I am the DON KING of literature, meaning I am a salesman at heart. And third, I was too stupid to think that it couldn't work.

4. Why did you sign with North Atlantic Books, passing over many major publishing houses in New York?

A: My dealings with East Coast publishers and agents were always by phone or fax. With North Atlantic, all meetings were face to face. Besides, they were more upfront and honest about the entire industry, while the New York people were lying through their teeth. They did not have my best interests at heart. My distributors at Publishers Group West will sell to the same stores as those at major houses, so that puts us on an even playing field. Plus, I received a better royalty package than anyone in New York could produce. I'm pleased with the deal.

5. Would you like to see your books as movies?

A: Of course I would. ICM, which happens to be the largest literary and talent agency in the country, contacted me about this issue. After discovering I would only receive \$1,000 for optioning my book, \$30,000 for it to be made into a feature film, or \$300,000 (minimum wage) to write it myself, I bought Final Draft software, learned how to do it from the tutorial, wrote the script, had it accepted, and am now waiting for production to begin on *Oaktown Devil*, the movie.

6. What advice would you give to aspiring writers?

A: Believe in yourself baby, and get rid of all the naysayers. Surround yourself with positive, like-minded people.

7. Why do you give free self-publishing workshops when everyone else charges a fee?

A: It's my way of giving back to my community. Most people who attend cannot afford to pay for their book to get published, much less learn how to do it. I remember when I first started and attended workshops/seminars. I felt that the presenters were only out to sell books so I promised myself that if I were ever in that position, I would host my workshops for free *and* provide the most comprehensive, truthful, and up-to-date knowledge available about the publishing industry.

8. Has anyone published from your workshop?

A: Yes. L. Doretta Kerl - 2000 (poetry); Anika Hamilton - 2001 (poetry); Ron Ward - 2002 (motivation); Qiana London - 2003 (romance novel). I always have my success stories attend future workshops and give presentations in order to show that we are making progress and it's working. People who gain the knowledge and information produce books.

9. What subjects do you cover?

A: Bar codes, ISBNs, copyrights, marketing, distribution, online selling, consignment selling, vintage presses, traditional presses, printing, seller and peddler permits, business licenses, fictitious names, accounting, and promotion, just to name a few. We also cover agents, managers, publishers, and so on and so forth.

10. How do you now feel about North Atlantic Books?

They're cool, we will be famous together, and they are like my family. Their sister company is called Frog, Ltd., and I've dubbed myself "Ghetto Frog."

Renay Jackson has been a custodian for the Oakland Police Department for more than fifteen years. He is a former rapper and street lit author with six novels to his credit. Jackson writes about what he's seen and what he knows. He has a loyal following among young black males and prisoners in particular, but has a compelling belief that what he writes will soon transcend this core audience and appeal to readers of all races and cultures. Jackson is a single father to three daughters and a niece and lives in Oakland, California.

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