

Latinidad – 6/09: Book Trailers

Contents:

1. Saludos
2. Q&A: Sister Outsider Entertainment
3. Success Story: Edna Campos Gravenhorst
4. Upcoming Workshops: Before You Send It Out
5. Resources: Magazine Seeks Teen Writers/Artists

BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

"In a jam-packed session, Marcela answered all my questions, debunked all the myths I was operating under and left me with a blueprint for how to publish fiction. I wish I had discovered Marcela years ago!"

--Shira Linden, author of "Unlucky in Lust"

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1. Saludos

Smart authors know they must invest their own time—and yes, their own money—in marketing their books. Most writers assume hiring a publicist will do the trick, but a traditional publicity campaign is unlikely to make your book stand out amidst the thousands of others also vying for the attention of the media and readers. One nontraditional tool worth investigating is the book trailer. An example of a successful book trailer is for Yiddish with Dick and Jane by Ellis Weiner and Barbara Davilman:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NlO5vUS5KnU>

The book trailer had over two million viewings and resulted in sales of the book quadrupling. Dollar for dollar, a good book trailer is a better investment than a print ad. To learn more, read this month's Q&A with Sister Outsider Entertainment founders Elisha Miranda and Sofia Quintero.

Helping Latinos get published,

Marcela Landres

marcelalandres@yahoo.com

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/>

2. Q&A

Elisha Miranda and Sofia Quintero are the founders of Sister Outsider Entertainment, a multimedia production company that develops projects

for television, film, and stage including the Internet series Sangria Street and the off-Broadway production of Pandora's. Elisha's feature film script Outside the Wall won the Tribeca All Access Award, the Outfest Screenwriting Competition, a Sundance Feature Filmmaking Finalist, a Voy Picture Lab Finalist, and a NALIP Director's Lab Fellow. Sofia's feature-length screenplay Interstates won the San Francisco Black Film Festival screenplay competition, the Montage Entertainment Diversity in Screenwriting contest, and was twice a finalist for the screenwriting lab at Sundance. For more information, visit <http://www.sisteroutsider.biz/>

Q: What kinds of books best lend themselves for adaptation into a book trailer?

A: With creativity and planning, any book can be translated into a trailer, but of course, fiction lends itself best. Regardless of the genre or topic, the first step in creating a trailer is preparing a script. Because we ourselves are both novelists and screenwriters, we have the skill and talent to translate the essence of your story into a visually stunning multimedia experience. Does this mean that we are adapting your book into a short film? No, because, believe it or not, that's not what you want. You want a video advertisement for your book that people should watch it and say, "I have to read that book now" not "Wow, can't wait to see that movie."

Q: When is the ideal time for authors to contact you in order to have a book trailer ready by the publication date of the book?

A: It is never too early to start socking away money to promote your book regardless of the ways you decide to do it. Once you have a strong draft of your book, we can begin writing the script to prepare for the production of its promotional video. Since we ourselves are working authors and filmmakers, we recommend that clients contact us a year before their tentative release date to get on our calendar. At minimum, give yourself three to six months before your release to viral your trailer on the web and drum up speaking engagements and book signings. You want to build anticipation and increase sales. But if you just found out about this promotional tool and your release date is next week, call us. We'll see if and what we can do for you.

Q: How closely do you work with authors when creating a book trailer? How much input should they expect to offer?

A: As authors, we respect our fellow authors, and we would never sacrifice the story for the image or vice versa. Not all filmmakers are capable or willing to do that. We also know that in today's publishing industry, authors have to invest as much time and energy into promoting their books as they do writing them. Sister Outsider gives clients three opportunities to review

the script and provide feedback on the video's rough cut to ensure that they are satisfied.

Q: How many minutes in length do you recommend a book trailer should be?

A: An effective trailer should be no more than three minutes, and less is best. Most amateur trailers are too long. Viewers either stop watching before it's done or decide they don't need to buy the book after all!

Q: What specific advice would you offer to authors who are considering hiring someone to make a book trailer of their work?

A: If you're going to make the investment of producing a trailer, then it's critical that you hire professionals and allow us to use our expertise to help you. We are thrilled that increasingly more authors are adopting a multimedia promotional strategy, but the average author doesn't understand the level of time and talent required to make an effective visual representation of their work that will generate sales. You know that feeling you get when, after months or even years over toiling over your book to make it the best it can be, someone quips, "You know, I think I'll write a book, too" as if it's the easiest thing in the world? Well, that's how we feel when someone who wants a trailer that looks like something they might see in a movie theater says, "But I'm not willing to pay a cent over \$500." Sure, you can save tons by having a friend or relative make it for you, but you also run a very high risk of having a video spoiled by poor acting, blurry camera work and choppy editing that will leave viewers wondering if your book is just as unprofessional. At Sister Outsider, you get what you pay for--a professional cast and crew. Even a bare-bones production involves trained and experienced actors, screenwriter, director, cinematographer (camera person), gaffer, sound person, and editor. There are hours of pre-production--from scripting to rehearsing and other steps in between--before we even start shooting, and post-production--assembling the footage, adding the music, adjusting the sound, etc.--takes at least forty hours. That said, we also remember what it's like to just break into both the publishing and film industries, which is why Sister Outsider has several options to fit a range of budgets, and we are very forthcoming about what each package buys you.

But if you're intent on going your own way, we still want to support you. E-mail us your first and last name at info@sisteroutsider.biz and ask for our free PDF 10 Signs of an Amateur Book Trailer. Mention that you read about us in Latinidad, and we'll throw in 5 Tips for a SIZZING Trailer. At the very least, read these two documents before you start. :-)

3. Success Story

"Marcela,

You along with editors, publishers, and agents are constantly encouraging writers to market their work-in-progress and not wait until the book is finished. For my first attempt at fiction, I thought why use someone else's quote as my signature on emails? I added a quote from my new book, *Negreta*, an American Nigress, to my e-mail signature. As soon as I did that, my phone started ringing, people wanted to know what the book was about. Then I was asked to read from my book, *Té de Canela/Cinnamon Tea*, for the students in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Dr. Kathleen Butterly Nigro has been using *Té de Canela/Cinnamon Tea* as required reading for the last five semesters. Since I had an audience, I shared a few paragraphs from *Negreta*; the students really liked what I read and so did Dr. Nigro.

On April 5, 2009, I received a letter from Dr. Nigro, president of the Kate Chopin Society of North America, Kirkwood Public Library, letting me know I have been selected as the recipient of the Kate Chopin Silver Wings Writing Award for 2009.

Marcela, keep encouraging writers to market their books while they are works-in-progress and to take advantage of every opportunity to read and discuss their writing. I appreciate the information you gather and send to us via *Latinidad*. You save us so much time and provide a much-needed service for free! I want you to know I am successful because I have listened to what you have been saying since I made contact with you in 2003."

--Edna Campos Gravenhorst, ecgravenhorst@sbcglobal.net,
<http://ednacamposgravenhorst.com/>

4. Upcoming Workshops

WHAT: Before You Send It Out Workshop

Agents and editors don't have time to read entire manuscripts. So how do they choose which writers they want to work with? Proposals. Regardless of whether you have a book for adults or children, in fiction or nonfiction, you need a strong proposal. But while many writers invest a significant amount of time, energy, and money in crafting their manuscripts, few know how to compose a proper proposal. In this class, you will learn:

1. • Why 90% of submissions are rejected based on the cover letter alone
2. • The single most reliable—and free!—resource for finding a good agent
3. • Three common, yet easily avoidable, mistakes writers make
4. • A proposal's true purpose (hint: it's not to demonstrate talent)

Note: The first 20 writers to register and send a manuscript will each receive

a 20-minute private consultation with Editorial Consultant Marcela Landres, who will offer professional suggestions and advice for each writer.

WHEN: Saturday, July 25; workshop from 9 a.m. to noon, private appointments from 1 p.m. to 8 p.m.

WHERE: Gemini Ink, 513 S. Presa, San Antonio, TX 78205

TESTIMONIAL: "Let me just say again how beneficial I found your presentation. As I mentioned before, I have been writing for most of my life but until relatively recently have not looked into publication. I have attended many workshops and presentations on breaking into the market in the last few years, and yours tops the list. You definitely have a gift. You give very specific advice (which so many seem to avoid) and are very encouraging. Please let me know if you are ever in the area again."
--Alicia Clay-ONeill

REGISTER: Visit <http://geminiink.gdcblogs.com/> then click on Classes and download PDF of Summer 2009 catalogue

QUESTIONS?: E-mail info@geminiink.org or call 877.734.WORD

List of upcoming workshops:
<http://www.marcelalandres.com/workshops.html>

5. Resources

HOW EDITORS THINK

"I read How Editors Think in one sitting and was engaged from beginning to end. It is well written, highly informative, and humorous—I found myself laughing out-loud in a few spots! Thanks for sharing the secrets of the trade."
—Mayra Lazara Dole, author of Down to the Bone

Inspired by my experience as a former Simon & Schuster editor, How Editors Think: The Real Reason They Rejected You reveals what it really takes to get published. For more information, visit:

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/E-book.html>

MAGAZINE SEEKS TEEN WRITERS/ARTISTS

RIP (Revitalize, Inspire, Perform) magazine, a quarterly publication for urban youth ages 13-19, is seeking youth correspondents, artists and photographers to submit their art, poems, and pictures and articles. For more information, visit <http://www.revitalizeinspireperform.com/>

BROOKLYN CREATIVE WRITING WORKSHOP

Class Dates: June 9 to July 28

Open to writers of all levels and genres. Led by poet and experienced workshop facilitator, Tamiko Beyer, in association with the NY Writers Coalition. For more information, visit <http://www.wonderinghome.com>
To register, email tamiko.b@gmail.com

SINGLE POEM AWARD

Deadline: July 1

The Happy Hour Poetry Award offers \$1000 and publication in Alehouse for a single poem. For more information, visit <http://alehousepress.homestead.com/>

\$30,000 FICTION PRIZE

Deadline: July 15

Bard College offers \$30,000 and a one-semester appointment as writer-in-residence to a U.S. fiction writer under the age of 40. For more information, visit <http://www.bard.edu/bfp/>

TRANSNATIONAL CULTURAL REMITTANCES GRANT

Deadline: July 24

NALAC offers grants to individuals, collectives, and community-based organizations in the U.S., Mexico, and Central America that are engaged in the practical exchange of culture. For more information, visit <http://www.nalac.org/>

NARRATIVE MAGAZINE CONTEST

Deadline: July 31

Seeking short shorts, short stories, essays, memoirs, photo essays, graphic stories, all forms of literary nonfiction, and excerpts from longer works of both fiction and nonfiction. For more information, visit <http://narrativemagazine.com/>

QUEENS COMMUNITY ARTS FUND

Deadline: For organizations 9/24, for individual artists 10/8

The purpose of QCAF is to direct city, state, federal, and private funds to carefully chosen local individuals and groups who have demonstrated their commitment to producing new work inspired by the community and/or to increasing cultural programming and access to the arts in Queens. For more information, visit

<http://www.queenscouncilarts.org/>

AAWW SUMMER WRITING WORKSHOPS

The Asian American Writers' Workshop prides itself on being a safe, nurturing space for writers of all levels and ethnicities to develop artistically and professionally. Classes cover a variety of genres including poetry, fiction, and flash fiction. For more information, visit http://www.aaww.org/events_workshops.html

NEW AMERICAN LIBRARY SEEKS MYSTERY EDITOR

New American Library seeks an editor, or senior editor depending on experience, to oversee its Obsidian mystery list. Must have at least three years of editorial experience in a commercial trade book publisher and experience editing mysteries. To apply, please send your resume, cover letter with salary requirements, an agent contact list and list of books edited to jobs@us.penguingroup.com and indicate position title in the subject line.

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If you like my web site, please nominate it for next year's Writer's Digest Magazine's "The 101 Best Web Sites for Writers" list. Send nominations to writersdig@fwpubs.com with "101 Best Web Sites" as the subject line and a brief note explaining how <http://www.marcelalandres.com/> has helped you. Thank you in advance for your support!

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"Hold on tight to the words of your ancestors."

--Maori Quote

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