Book Publicity 101

Holly Watson PR
literary publicity
6 Months To 1 Year Before Pub:

Social Media:

- At least 6 months to 1 year prior to your book’s publication, begin to engage on social media.
- Do: Be authentic; Be generous; Be consistent.
- Do: Announce Your Book: With a Cover Reveal, List of Tour Dates, Short Excerpt, etc.
- Do: Spread word of interviews, reviews, etc.
- Don’t: Only talk about your book or yourself.
Timeline

3 to 6 Months Before Pub:

- **Blurbs**: If you don’t have blurbs/endorsements already, now is the time to get them.

- **Press kits**: should be created.

- **Media Lists**: should start being compiled using your own contacts and/or a paid media database service.

- **Net Galley**: This is when your book should go up on Net Galley or a similar digital galley provider. NetGalley is important because it is one of the best ways for an author to connect directly with bloggers, reviewers and other media.

- **Galley Mailing**: Now is the time to get your physical galleys (also known as ARC’s or Advance Review Copies) mailed out to trade reviewers, monthly magazines, major book review editors at print newspapers and websites, as well as any national broadcast media.

- **Good Reads**: If you haven’t already done this, make sure your book is on Good Reads. This is a great time to do a give away on Good Reads as well.
3 Months to 6 Weeks Before Pub:

- **Media Lists**: Create media list for finished books. This should be a larger list than your galley list and can consist of a very large list to contacts that you will email only to begin with and then follow up with by sending finished books. Examples of media targeted in this list would be producers at podcasts and radio shows; freelance writers, bloggers and more print/online reporters/editors.

- **Galley Follow Ups**: Follow up with the media to whom you sent galleys. Remember that many book review editors have a policy of not giving out the review status of a book but following up is still a good idea.

- **Net Galley**: Engage with readers/media on Net Galley and make sure to get reviews posted on sites such as Good Reads, Net Galley and individual blogs.

- **Original Essays/Op-Eds**: This is the perfect time for authors to start placing any original essays or op-eds, even if only peripherally related to the subject of the book.

- **Finished Book Mailing**: 6 weeks to 4 weeks in advance of a books publication is when finished books are traditionally sent to media.
**Timline**

6 Weeks Before Pub To On Sale Date and Beyond:

- **Pitch:** This is when most interviews are booked, reviews are confirmed and when any publicist will be the most busy working on a book.

- **Schedule:** interviews/coverage on podcasts, radio shows, blogs, websites, etc for right before or after a book goes on sale.

- **Publicize Events:** Make sure you have a crowd at your events by inviting all your friends and friends of friends wherever you are speaking. Make sure the events venue is also doing their part in spreading word of the event.

- **Amplify:** Spread the word about anything happening on your book via social media, your website, newsletter, etc.
More on Media Lists & Events

Media Lists:

- **Your own contacts are critical**: Whether you are self-published author or being published by a big house, your own media contacts can be critical.

- **Subscription media database**: Anyone can subscribe to a media database such as Cision or MuckRack to pull media lists. These will provide you with journalists contact information as well as their beat and whether or not they are a PR contact.

- **NetGalley**: Connects you directly with the media and bloggers.

- **Social Media**: Following journalists on social media allows you to connect directly if you have a relevant story or angle. You can also add journalists you identify as being important to your media lists.

Events:

- **Scheduling An Event**: Only schedule an event that you can bring an audience to or with a bookseller/venue that is excited to host.

- **How to Reach Out**: Most independent bookstores list information on how to schedule an event on their website. If you do reach out directly, make sure to emphasize the crowd you can bring in, how your book is distributed, etc.

- **Collaborate**: With the events coordinator, and your publicist if you have one, to get out the word about the event to any contacts you have in the area and any media contacts the store may have to ensure you have a great event.
Press Release Basics

**Must Haves:**
- Publicist or Publisher Contact Information.
- Book Jacket and/or Author Photo.

**Book Description:**
- A short summary of the book. This can be similar to flap copy or catalog copy.
- The whole release should fit on a single piece of paper, double sided.

**Author Info:**
- Short bio, web address, social media handles.
- Background that is interesting or relevant that is not in the bio.

**Why Do We Care:**
- Praise—either blurbs or quotes from reviews.
- Information on awards for the author or the book.
- Connections to relevant news stories, the season, or even a place.
**Now Available in Paperback from Ecco**

ALL INVOLVED: A Novel by Ryan Gattis

A provocative and ambitious novel as electrifying as The Wire, from a writer hailed as the West Coast's Richard Price—a mesmerizing epic of crime and opportunity, race, revenge, and loyalty, set in the wake of the Rodney King riots

"A high-energy thriller of a novel that keeps moving, sometimes remaining in its embrace and at the same time narrated by a bone-deep understanding of its characters and their world in a gang-plagued neighborhood of L.A. Wood, South Central... All involved, has the vital zest of a Robert B. Parker novel, the epic grandeur of Eastwood's film, the feel of James Ellroy's L.A. stories. The narrative thrust is gripping and the final confrontation is bone-breaking..." —Garth Risk Hallberg, The New York Times

A gritty and complex work of fiction, All Involved vividly recreates the incident and harrowing time through heartfelt, trenchant first-person narratives. Featuring on a silver of life's hopeful and despairing beauty burned by the blaze during the riots, Ryan Gattis paints a portrait of modern America itself—tapped from history, the present, and the imagination. Reunited with the voices of gang members, firefighters, street kids, and nurses caught up in these extraordinary circumstances, ALL INVOLVED is a literary tour de force.

Ryan Gattis (ryanattis.com) is a writer and educator. His latest work, All Involved, is grounded in nearly 25 years of research & background work with former LA gang members, street kids, and other LA citizens who lived through the 1992 riots. He teaches on the writing level in the process at a recent TLA class. Gattis lives in Los Angeles, where he is a member of the street art crew OGA/ARTworks.

Edward Sorel's life's work will be celebrated in a retrospective at Boston University's Howard Gotlieb Center Opening on March 19, 2017

MARY ASTOR'S PURPLE DIARY
The Great American Sex Scandal of 1936

Edward Sorel

Life is a wonderful! I live on the 19th floor, in a spacious apartment I owned years ago and found on the floor plan. When I married, I was a young and rather unknown actress in New York. My husband, a famous and respected photographer, had me live in the apartment and then, following your own advice, I paid you a small sum to take a picture of me. I thank you very much. I am a book. Not only does he then write a terrific book, but he illustrates it with his wonderful photographs of dazzling women. I would imagine that Mary Astor's diary would provide such entertaining reading, but in Sorel's collection, his style, his wit, is just as unique, funny, and in the end, touching.


—Robert Gay, With a Flirtation of Thunder, the actress has portrayed the best-known glamour of movie Hollywood, and his affectionately converted prose gives Mary and her story a kind of silent dignity not conveyed with the usual.

—Edward Sorel, Wall Street Journal

—Ralph S. Farley, Entertainment Weekly

Black in the early thirties, Mary Astor was a movie star in the making, gaining notice as a featured player opposite leading men like Clark Gable and William Powell. When it came out, this has been a lasting, enviable to appearance with the glamorous George S. Astor, her manner in society. The actress then becomes known as the skilled--and beautiful--moviestar.
Evolution of A Press Release Part One:

• The Galley Letter: If the book is being made available as a galley then the galley letter will come first and will form the basis of the press release.

• Galley Letter vs. Press Release:

  What’s Different: Format; Blurs or Quotes; Length

  What’s the Same: Book Description; Author Info
Evolution of the Press Release Part Two:

The Pitch Letter: The most standard accompaniment to the press release.

- Similar to the press release but expands on the book description, with more reasons on why the author should be interviewed.
- Often uses bullet points to highlight talking points and/or to detail out features such as photos, recipes or new information within the book.

Dear [Publisher/Editor],

Americans are so habituated to dining out that home cooked meals now constitute a special occasion. And yet, as Paul Freeman reveals in rich detail in TEN RESTAURANTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA (to be published in September 2016), our culinary culture outside the south is much younger than the country itself.

Charting ten crucial establishments (not necessarily the “best,” but the most game changing), Freeman reveals an interdisciplnary food study program at Yale shows how the first restaurants on American soil catered to the upper classes in the latter half of the 19th century before crossing over into mainstream life and responding to social trends. Evolving as the nation did, restaurants kept pace with a growing consumer base that demanded food not merely as fuel, but as pleasure and entertainment. Immigration from all corners of the world brought variety to the rather pallid American diet; while technology and modern transportation provided greater accessibility to our food choices. In the process we grew farther and farther removed from the agrarian society we once prided ourselves on, until—in a twist Freedman notes in his epilogue—we now speak unironically of the “farm-to-table” movement as revolutionary.

Featuring over 90 photographs and illustrations, TEN RESTAURANTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA begins in 1831 with the opening of Delmonico’s in New York; the first true establishment (a beit catering exclusively to affluent men) for fine dining. Long disparaged by haughty international connoisseurs, American cuisine—even if in imitation of the French—was soon raised to a new standard. Freedman explains how an emerging middle class with more leisure time and money to spend helped democratize the choices beyond lobster palaces and Gilded Age steakhouses; places that were economical and family friendly. Fast food prevailed (like Howard Johnson’s and Shraft’s) but so did ethnic and regional specialties (emplified in New York by Manna Leone’s and in New Orleans with Antoine’s). Restaurants could be aspirational and a sign of status (Le Pavillon and The Four Seasons), but could also be bold reappraisals of previously underappreciated cuisines (The Mandarin and Sylvia’s).

With actual recipes from these restaurants, Freedman also shares the iconic dishes introduced to the American palate including Antoine’s Oysters Rockefeller and flambéed coffee, called “Café Diabolique” and Delmonico’s “Lobster Newburg,” “Baked Alaska,” and “Eggs Benedict.”

Introduced by a restaurateur who is himself changing the American dining landscape—Danny Meyer—TEN RESTAURANTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA documents not just how we eat, but the ways in which our dining habits intersect with race and class, immigration, and assimilation.

Sincerely,

Cordelia Calvert
Publicity Assistant
Liveright Publishing Corporation
A Division of W.W. Norton & Company
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PR
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Contemporary humans living in modern societies take much for granted—not least obvious things like running water, electricity and indoor plumbing—but overlook the fact that we can peacefully co-exist with hundreds of incredibly diverse strangers while going about our daily business. As Pulitzer Prize winning author Jared Diamond, who is also the author of the bestselling books GUNS, GERMS, AND STEEL and Collapse, joins out in his groundbreaking new book THE WORLD UNTIL YESTERDAY: WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM TRADITIONAL SOCIETIES? (W.W. Norton: December 31st, 2012; $26.00; 078-0-870-0248-3) this is a relatively recent phenomenon. For nearly six million years of existence, humans lived in ways that is radically different from how most of us live now. Many of the changes are clearly for the better. But not all, asserts Diamond, and there is still much to learn from our own past and from contemporary traditional societies.

His most personal book to date, THE WORLD UNTIL YESTERDAY is filled with anecdotes from Diamond’s extensive field work in Papua New Guinea over the last 48 years, as well as relevant studies from his own childhood and parenting years, and provides a mesmerizing first-hand account of the human past. Without romanticizing the past or traditional societies, Diamond suggests lessons we can learn to improve our own modern lives. In an interview, he can discuss:

- Why he, especially now that he’s 75, hopes that more respect and esteem can be placed on elderly people and that we can recognize the important role they play in modern society. It is no coincidence that we use the phrase “tribal elders” when discussing the leaders and wise people of traditional societies, and Diamond advocates that we act likewise and place more value on our own elders.
- How to learn from those who are more committed to making sense of an ever more complex and fast-changing world in ways that are more organic and adapted to group dynamics by adopting certain traditional child rearing techniques.
- What we can learn regarding diet, health, and illness in traditional societies where contemporary health care may be more than a far distant memory.
- The benefits of being multilingual or bilingual. Diamond states that “if current trends continue, 95% of the languages... will be extinct or moribund by the year 2100,” and he presents a convincing case for why it is essential to preserve our world’s vanishing languages.

Currently a professor of geography at UCLA, Jared Diamond is also known for his extensive work in evolutionary biology, anthropology, environmental history and linguistics, to name a few, and THE WORLD UNTIL YESTERDAY synthesizes his amazing range of learning together with his own fascinating personal stories in what is one of his most urgent and enlightening books yet.

Jared Diamond will be on tour in January. Tour dates and cities are on the reverse and he can forward to setting up an interview.
Evolution of the Press Release Part Three:

- The Interview Alert: The pitch letter in different clothes. Occasionally useful when creating the pitch email.
- Q&A: Sometimes a Q&A with an author can be helpful to have on hand, especially if the book is dense or if the author has an interesting back story.

Interview Alert:

LISTENING FOR WHAT MATTERS
Avoiding Contextual Errors in Health Care

(OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS; ON SALE: January 12, 2016)
Saul J. Weiner, M.D. and Alan Schwartz, Ph.D.

WHAT:
LISTENING FOR WHAT MATTERS: Avoiding Contextual Errors in Health Care is based on groundbreaking research conducted by authors Saul J. Weiner, M.D. and Alan Schwartz, Ph.D. over a period of 10 years and explains how and why doctors commonly fail when diagnosing and treating patients. With federal grants, Weiner and Schwartz conducted studies, which first sent authors, called Unannounced Standardized Patients (“USPs”) and then real patients, to hundreds of doctors visits with hidden audio-recording devices so that the research team could listen and analyze the results of the visits. This is their story.

WHY:
LISTENING FOR WHAT MATTERS is a fascinating and never-before-seen look behind the curtain at our doctors’ offices. In an interview, Weiner and Schwartz can discuss:

- How they conducted their research, from the time they spent creating identities for the actors playing patients (Unannounced Standardized Patients or “USPs”), in their first experiment, which involved creating false identities, including health insurance papers, and training actors to become patients.
- Some of the most surprising things they learned while conducting these experiments—stories from the trenches revealed by the doctors and patients that went into the doctors’ offices under cover.
- Why doctors so frequently miss patient clues that are glaring—termed “contextual errors” and “omic errors”—even when these red flags seem obvious to the reader.
- What medical schools can do to better train health care professionals to listen and engage with patients on an individual level so that patients’ health care outcomes are better.

WHO:
Saul Weiner and Alan Schwartz have worked together for over 10 years, combining their complementary expertise into a unique collaboration.

Saul Weiner, M.D., is a board-certified internist and pediatrician with practice, leadership, and research experience in a variety of health care settings. He is now Professor of Medicine, Pediatrics, and Medical Education, and Vice President for Planning and Programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and Deputy Director of the Center for Innovation for Complex Chronic Care at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Alan Schwartz, Ph.D., is a cognitive psychologist with expertise in decision making, organizational behavior, and measurement with over a decade of experience evaluating and training health care providers to improve quality. He is now the Michael Reese endowed Professor of Medical Education and Associate Head of the Department of Medical Education and Research Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

For more information about Listening for What Matters, please visit: http://www.contextbuildingcare.org

Q&A:

A Conversation with

ROBIN MACARTHUR
Author of HALF WILD

Published: August 2, 2016

Q1: Half Wild has such a strong sense of place. It’s an ode to Vermont. Have you always felt this bond to your home state?

As I’ve always felt inextricably bound to that place, though I didn’t always want to feel that way. I was born and grew up on the hillside where my dad also grew up in southern Vermont, surrounded by extended family and barns and fields and woods and farm animals and wildlife and so much else. It’s a place defined, for me, by interconnections with the land (my parents are farmers and sugar-sellers), with a network of extended family and with a small-town community where everyone knows—celebrates but craves—all of the characters in Half Wild. It’s an, to be anywhere but here. I sought individually, freed, bright lights, to be stripped of my ties to this place and reclaim myself anew with them. And yet when I eventually left—first New Orleans and New York and Mexico and various other places (I had a habit of taking long road trips to the desert), I found myself feeling like Hanish in ‘The Woman Where I’m From,’ what she says, “There are two worlds I tend not to belong to. Home and any other.” The father I got hurt, the more I played for it. This book is my extended grappling with that push and pull towards and away from home.

Q2: Half Wild is your fiction debut. How long have you been working on these stories, and what was it like putting them together?

As I began working on these stories eight years ago, right at the time I moved back to Vermont and the cabin my husband and I had built a few years earlier. It was also around the time I got pregnant with my daughter, and then my life turned a brand ofSubtext: My husband and I were moving...
How the Press Release Is Really Used:

- **It Gets Emailed:** Most pitches are now done via email. People aren’t going to read a full length PR in standard PR formatting on their email.

- **And Individualized:** While a few lines from that tried and true PR will remain in its same form through many different pitches, each media contact should be approached individually, based on who they are, where they are and what’s going on in the world when you pitch them.

- **And forms the basis of information for some interviewers:** Not all media contacts will read a whole book before covering, so sometimes the press materials are crucial in forming the basis of interview questions. This is especially true of “pitching extras” like interview alerts, pitch letters or Q&A’s.

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Dear Jo,

I'm writing you to see if you received and might be considering coverage of Maryn McKenna's *BIG CHICKEN: The Incredible Story of How Antibiotics Created Modern Agriculture and Changed the Way the World Eats* (National Geographic; September 12, 2017) in which McKenna chronicles how antibiotics transformed chicken from a local delicacy to an industrial commodity and the world's most popular meat. Crucial to its meteoric rise: the routine use of antibiotics, a practice that would transform agriculture, change the world's eating habits, and contribute to the deadly rise of drug-resistant infections around the globe.

We've gotten some great early endorsements:

“A must-read for anyone who cares about the quality of food and the welfare of animals.”
- Mark Bittman, author of *How To Cook Everything*

“If you think raising farm animals on antibiotics is nothing to worry about, Big Chicken will change your mind in a hurry. Maryn McKenna's account of the profit-driven politics that allowed widespread antibiotic resistance should be required reading for anyone who cares about food and health.”
- Marion Nestle, author of *Food Politics*

**About the Author:** Maryn McKenna is an award-winning journalist (*New York Times Magazine; Atlantic; Wired; Scientific American*), critically acclaimed author (*Superbug* and *Beating Back the Devil*) and TED Fresenter (her talk *What do we do when antibiotics don't work anymore* has over a million views).

**About the Book:** Antibiotics changed the world. Then we gave them to the animals we eat. This is the story of what happened next.

Thanks for considering,

Holly

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From: Holly Watson <holly@hollywatsonpr.com>
Subject: TEN RESTAURANTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA by Paul Freedman/In Conversation with Paolo Lucchesi (SF Chronicle) at Mechanic's Institute and Cecilia Chiang at Yang Sink on 10/20 & 10/21

Dear Amy,

I'm writing you about Paul Freedman's *TEN RESTAURANTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA* on sale now from Liveright, and featured this week in both *The New York Times* and the *New Yorker*.

Paul Freedman will be coming to the Bay Area on 10/20 & 10/21 and is available on those dates for interviews in person. He's also available ahead of time via phone/ama l or remote studio. On 10/20 Paul will speak with Paolo Lucchesi of the SF Chronicle at 12:30PM at the *Mechanic's Institute* and on 10/21 he will be in conversation with Cecilia Chiang at Yang Sink Restaurant in an event co-hosted by Omnivore Books.

Paul will be coming back to the Bay Area in November to do a special event at Chez Panisse on 11/22 with Alice Waters. Both Cecila Chiang's former iconic (and now closed) restaurant The Mandarin as well as Alice Waters' Chez Panisse are featured in *TEN RESTAURANTS THAT CHANGED AMERICA*.

In the book, Freedman discusses which ten restaurants have been the most influential—not necessarily the best—in terms of influencing not only what American's eat, but how we eat—who we share tables with, how our eating habits reflect such changes in the country as the end of slavery and the African Diaspora, the rise of the middle class, the changing role of women in society and much more. Reflected in the book are also meditations on regional foods and phenomena and, within the chapters on the Chez Panisse in Berkeley and The Mandarin in SF, he discusses such issues as immigration, the rise of "ethnic" cuisine, "California" cuisine and the resurgence of local and seasonal foods that continues today.

You should have received a copy of the book by now. Please let me know if you are interested in speaking with Paul Freedman, or in covering the book or any of Paul's events.

I have posted more information about the book below.

Sincerely,

Holly

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Why Hire a Book Publicist

What Can a Book Publicist Do that is Different from What the Author Can Do?

• **Create Media Lists:** based on her own lists as well as those of a paid media database.

• **Pitch:** the book to journalists and get the book in front of book review editors that do not welcome non-PR people contacting them.

• **Schedule Events:** Publicists may have connections with stores and venues that you are not connected with and/or be able to coordinate events with stores that would not ordinarily work directly with authors.

• **Keep Following Up:** Publicists can be persistent with media contacts (even those the author is “friends” with) far beyond the point when the author following up alone would be annoying.

• **Discover:** new opportunities for your book. Publicists are always pitching multiple books at a given time and this can lead to new opportunities for authors.
What to Expect from a Book Publicist

- **Depends on Your Price Range:** Publicists will charge anywhere (in general) from $3,000.00 to $20,000.00 and what you pay largely determines what you get in terms of scope of work, length of commitment, level of service, etc.

- **Depends on Your Book:** Fiction? Non-fiction? Memoir? Biography? Genre? How To? Self-Help? Cookbook? All these books are received by the media in radically different ways and therefore require radically different publicity campaigns. Some kinds of books will definitely benefit more than others from having a publicist involved.

- **Always Expect:** Feedback and updates in a timely manner and remember this is something that can be negotiated ahead of time when you negotiate your contract. Also remember that if your publicist is working with you for several months, there will be times when you are in constant communication and times when you are only in touch once a week or so, just because of the natural timeline of a book’s life.

- **Remember:** Unless a paid review is being arranged, a publicist cannot definitively promise guaranteed publicity but can only tell you what she realistically expects in terms of results and based on past experience.

- **How to Get the Best Experience:** Air all of your questions and concerns before officially signing on to work with a publicist. Feel free to ask for references or endorsements from past clients.

- **Collaborate:** You and your publicist are a team. You can decide ahead of time to outsource much (or all) of the publicity work to your publicist OR you can decide to divide and conquer. Whatever you decide, remember that you are both working to the same end.