

Why New York Police Officer Samuel Battle Didn't Publish his Memoir

Lessons from One Righteous Man...Video



One Righteous Man: Samuel Battle and the Shattering of the Color Line in New York, by Arthur Browne is the story of the life of the first African-American police officer.

Journalist Arthur Browne recently appeared on C-Span to discuss the life of the policeman who had a challenging and historic career.

After retirement, Mr. Battle hired the famous poet Langston Hughes, received a foreword from his friend, First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and made several attempts to interest publishers in his memoir.

No interest.

After hearing the amazing story of Samuel Battle, one wonders why then was self-publishing not explored? There's no evidence to

suggest that the strategy was considered, according to Arthur Browne.

In the 1950s, *Battle in Harlem* was the title of the manuscript completed. One suspects that the earlier work, based on that title, and given the cultural climate would not have appealed to mainstream publishers for a number of reasons.

Repeated rejections from publishers have led many to take matters into their own hands and produce their own work.

Entrepreneurial Takeaways

Self-publishing isn't for everyone, but many iconic figures turned to self-publishing. W.E. B. Du Bois is one example notes book marketing expert John Kremer.

As a retired police lieutenant, Samuel Battle had many elements of the skills necessary to market his work entrepreneurially. But he likely did not have the aptitude of a marketer. An effective law enforcement professional may not have the creative skills of a marketing expert, according to aptitude researchers.

Marketing is not just selling but knowing how to produce the right product, in this case, a book with the right content and finding the right people to help sell the concept.

Compare the title of the 1950's manuscript with that of the present day biography *One Righteous Man...*. Which title do you think, based solely on the names would have a broader appeal? Why?

Regardless of how renowned the reputation, hiring a poet,

novelist,
playwright to write a memoir was not the best way to complete Samuel Battle's project. There are several instances where famous authors attempt to write outside their favored genre with less than stellar results. (Example: Shields, *To Kill A Mockingbird*, recounts the difficulty faced by novelist Harper Lee author in completing a nonfiction project.)

Langston Hughes was not only the wrong person for the project, but a market savvy person would likely have avoided using the poet because his political views might have caused traditional publishers to decline the book proposal.

Back then, depending on the book's editorial focus, publications such as The Negro Travelers' Green Book and Ebony magazine might have been a means of marketing the memoir independently

**Dee Adams is the author of
Finding Your Niche: Discover...
<https://nichecreativity.com/finding-your-niche-ebook/>**

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Book Excerpt

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Self-publishing hall of fame

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The Green Book

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