

By: Sydney Salomon

Having embarked on an internship journey with Red Sky Presents, a publishing company in New York, I found myself immersed in an eye-opening experience that perfectly complemented my passion for writing and poetry as an English major. Under the guidance of CEO Micky Hyman, a figure revered for his intelligence and dedication, I discovered a realm where youthful enthusiasm met seasoned expertise, igniting a passion for hands-on learning.

As a self-published poet with seven books available on major platforms like Amazon and Barnes & Noble, I was thrilled to delve into the intricacies of publishing behind the scenes. My role as an editorial associate provided me with invaluable opportunities to collaborate directly with authors. From editing manuscripts to refining formatting details, every task allowed me to contribute to the creation of compelling literary works while expanding my skill set.

One of the highlights of my internship was the chance to assist in the publication of Toni Blackman's "The Wisdom of the Cypher." She was appointed as the first Hip-Hop Representative of the United States State Department. Additionally, I had the privilege of being part of the final stages of editing for Laurie Hyman's third installment in her beloved "Sweet Tales" children's series. Reading the initial two books in the series brought me pleasure, as they provided valuable insights into the world of children's writing. These experiences not only deepened my understanding of the publishing process but also reinforced my commitment to the craft of storytelling.

Despite the virtual nature of my internship, I found myself fully immersed in the dynamic world of publishing. Collaborating with seasoned editors and authors through phone calls and email correspondence provided me with invaluable mentorship and insights into industry best practices. Through meticulous proofreading and research tasks, I honed my attention to detail and gained a profound appreciation for the importance of precision in publishing.

While virtual work presented its share of challenges, such as communication barriers and the absence of face-to-face interaction, the supportive environment fostered by the opportunity to work directly with the publisher and the authors made this experience truly rewarding. Their guidance and encouragement propelled me forward, instilling in me a sense of confidence and readiness to tackle future endeavors in the publishing world.

During my internship with Red Sky Presents, I had the extraordinary opportunity to travel to New York and attend the inaugural Fresh, Bold & So Def Symposium alongside Micky and Laurie, the CEO and author respectively, at the Lincoln Center for Performing Arts. This symposium, a heartfelt tribute to women in Hip-Hop, featured a Fireside Chat by Toni Blackman titled "Straighten Your Crown: Staying Grounded and Centered in Self-Care." Witnessing Toni's moving discussion on the transformative power of sisterhood, community, and mental health was truly enlightening. Alongside Santi Das, an influential American music industry executive, Toni shared personal stories, offered invaluable advice, and discussed future plans, all revolving around the theme of wellness. Having previously assisted Toni with the final tasks for her publication, "The Wisdom of the Cypher," seeing her discuss it in such a prestigious setting was deeply rewarding. This experience not only allowed me to network with industry professionals

but also provided a profound understanding of the heroines in Hip-Hop, all while sharing the experience with Micky and Laurie, who continue to inspire me in my journey toward becoming a publisher.

I am grateful to Saint Elizabeth University for facilitating this extraordinary internship opportunity, which has undoubtedly brought me one step closer to realizing my dream of becoming a publisher. Special thanks to Mr. Pastino for his unwavering support and guidance throughout this transformative journey. As I near graduation, I am eager to see how this internship experience will continue to shape my potential in the writing field and beyond.

The following are statements from Laurie Hyman, author of three of four children's book series, and Micky Hyman, the esteemed CEO, regarding my internship involvement and Saint Elizabeth's internship program.

Laurie Hyman: "Sydney was a pleasure to work with. The dedication she demonstrated to do her work was impeccable. The willingness to fulfill her tasks provided me, and Red Sky with books, at their readiness to be successfully published. Witnessing Sydney and Toni's interaction highlighted how beneficial her assistance was in ensuring that Toni's book received the final touches needed for publication. Her support played a crucial role in the completion of Toni's project. Thanks for finding Sydney to work on my Sweet Tales Series – As an intern, I couldn't have asked for anyone more willing to learn, grow, and be an important asset to my book, which be published next month."

Micky Hyman: "I am so pleased that Sydney's internship experience with us is a positive one. We feel it has been a privilege to take part in Saint Elizabeth's internship program and look forward to continuing the relationship for many years."