



They said...

**NIGGAS
DON'T
READ**

THE RISE & FALL OF THE BLACK BOOKSTORE

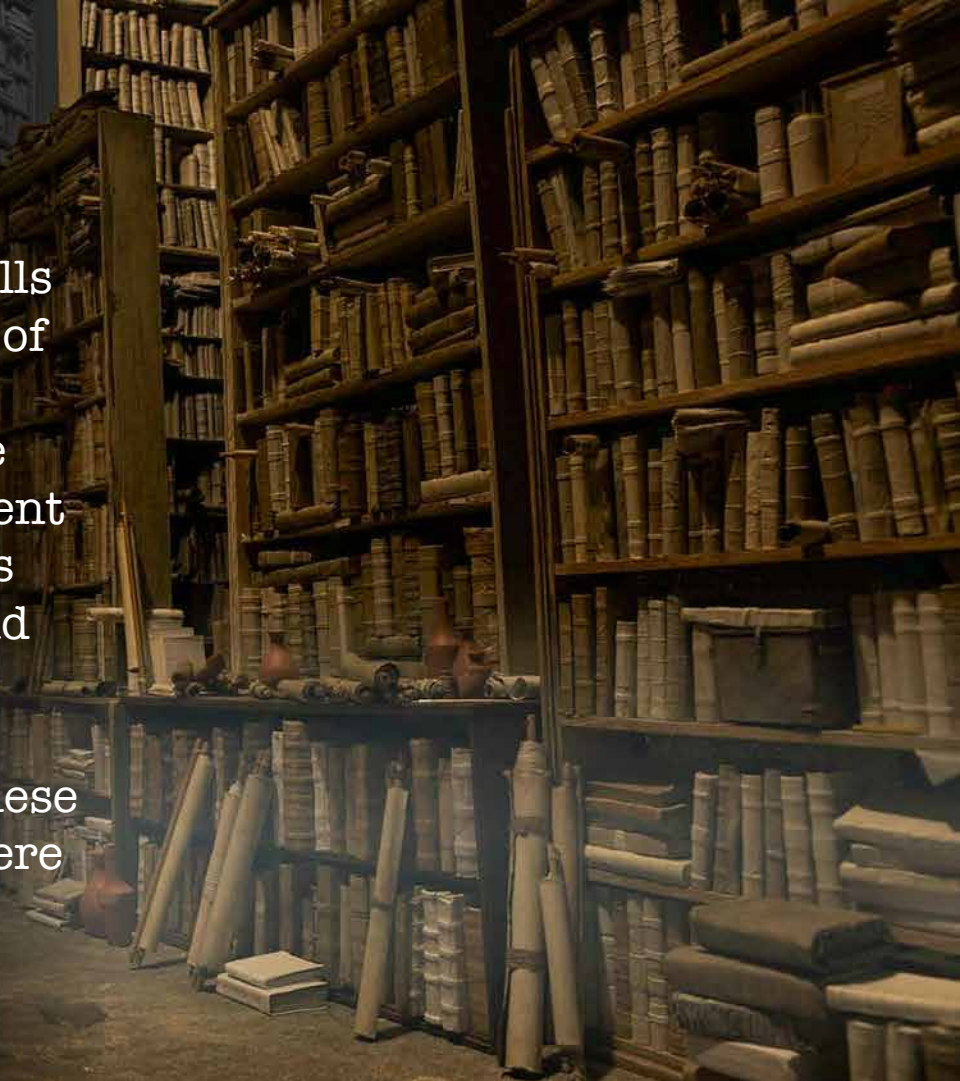
A FEATURE DOCUMENTARY FILM



Drum & Spear Book Store
Washington, DC

LOGLINE

“They Said Niggas Don’t Read (NDR)” tells the compelling story of the rise and fall of the Black bookstore in the 70s, 80s and 90s and the connection to and influence on the ongoing Black liberation movement in America, today. Told through the lens of five legendary movement builders and the houses of books they built, “Niggas Don’t Read,” also exposes the malicious COINTELPRO-powered plot to ensure these movements never grew the legs they were destined to.



SYNOPSIS

“Niggas Don’t Read: The Rise & Fall of the Black Bookstore” (NDR) is an historical expose of a critical component of Black culture in America, as told through the eyes of a set of social/civil justice oriented and entrepreneurial luminaries from within the Black community, who made it their lives to uplift and educate their people. From the beginning of the Black power era in America, the Black bookstore served a number of purposes, including cultural and intellectual breeding ground for new ideas of empowerment, education and revolution. But it also served as part learning temple and part gathering spot for community while providing a critical link between the present and a time bygone that could contain the seeds for the future. These bookstores were cultural institutions.

However, soon it was determined, despite all the admonition from white America of Black people in this country needing to do better on the heels of desegregation and the civil rights movement, that Black bookstores were actually a grave threat to the security of the United States. It was the same agency -- the Federal Bureau of Investigation -- that deemed Black liberation and self-advocacy organizations like the Black Panther Party for Self Defense domestic terrorism organizations that ultimately labeled and targeted Black bookstores for subversion and, ultimately, destruction.

SYNOPSIS

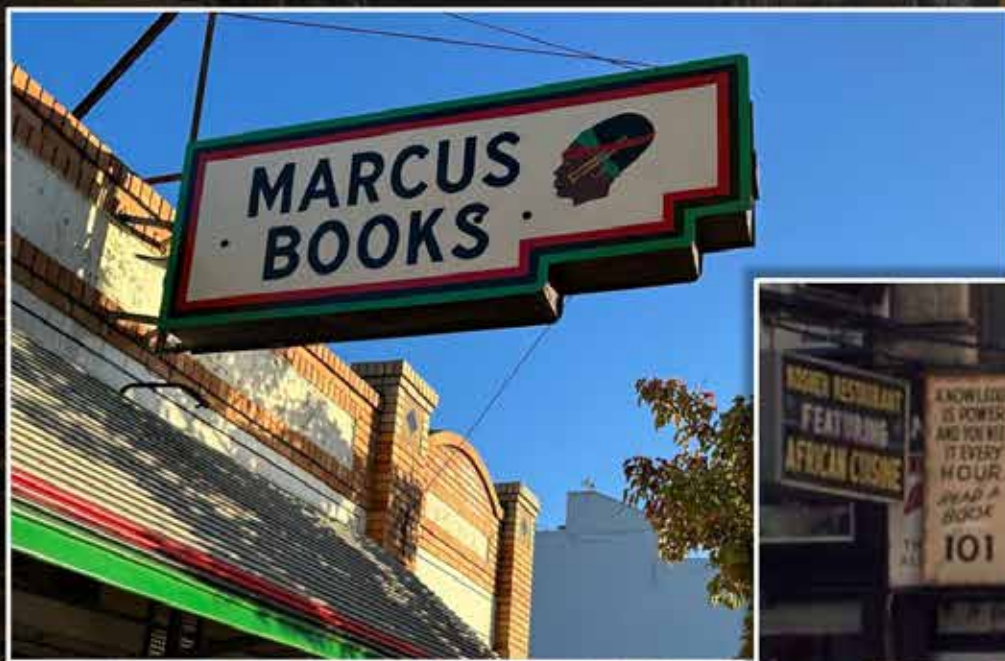
Through extensive research, archival documentation via hundreds of Freedom of Information Act requests, and firsthand interviews with the luminaries who lived the experience and many who are still living, NDR tells the story of a time before the internet, before libraries had sections on African American history and when there was only one recourse to counter the failing educational landscape for people of African descent in America -- do for self.

Excerpt from “The FBI’s War on Black-Owned Bookstores: At the height of the Black Power movement, the Bureau focused on the unlikeliest of public enemies: black independent booksellers” by Joshua Clark Davis, February 19, 2018, The Atlantic:

In the spring of 1968, FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover announced to his agents that COINTELPRO, the counterintelligence program established in 1956 to combat communists, should focus on preventing the rise of a “Black ‘messiah’” who sought to “unify and electrify the militant black nationalist movement.” The program, Hoover insisted, should target figures as ideologically diverse as the Black Power activist Stokely Carmichael (later Kwame Ture), Martin Luther King Jr., and Nation of Islam leader Elijah Muhammad.

Just a few months later, in October 1968, Hoover penned another memo warning of the urgent menace of a growing Black Power movement, but this time the director focused on the unlikeliest of public enemies: black independent booksellers.

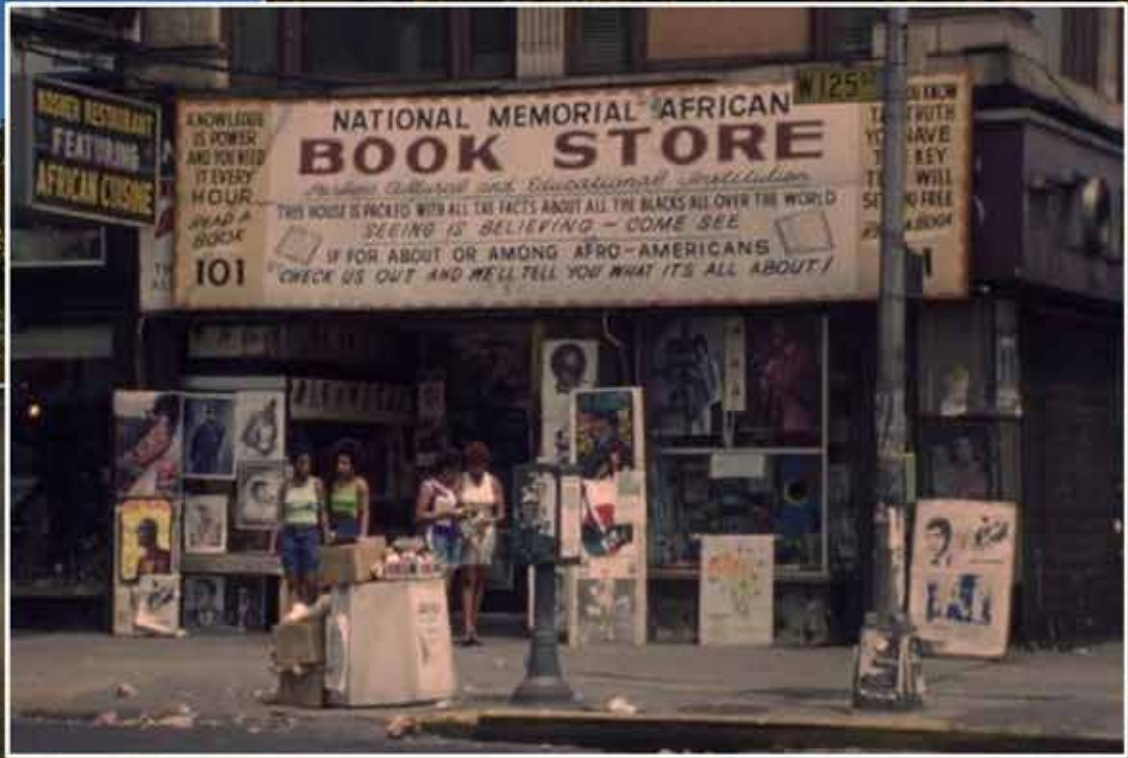




Marcus Books
Philadelphia, PA



National Memorial African Book Store,
Harlem, NY



PRIMARY INTERVIEW SUBJECTS



W. Paul Coates is the founder and principal of Black Classic Press, which specializes in republishing obscure and significant works by and about people of African descent. A leader in the field of small publishers, Coates founded BCP Digital Printing in 1995 to produce books and documents using digital print technology.

Father of Ta-Nehisi Coates.



Baba Nati Nataki-Kamau is the co-founder and proprietor of Everyone's Place African Culture Center, on North Avenue in Baltimore, Maryland, which, at more than 30 years old, is one of the longest continuous runs of a Black bookstore in the nation. He is also the founder of Afrikan World Books, one of the country's oldest, largest and most influential distributors of Black books.



Judy Richardson in 1968, shortly after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., along with other former SNCC staffers, founded Drum and Spear Bookstore in Washington, D.C. It became the largest Black bookstore in the country, with Richardson as the children's editor of Drum and Spear Press.[8] Richardson said about the bookstore's name that the drum symbolized "communications within the diaspora" while the spear suggested "whatever else might be necessary for the liberation of the people."

PRIMARY INTERVIEW SUBJECTS



Simba Sana is the co-founder of Karibu Books, the largest black-owned bookstore chain in the United States before closing in 2008, and the author of *Never Stop*, a memoir. Sana graduated from Mount Saint Mary's University with a double major in accounting and business and holds two master's degrees: one in African Studies from Howard University, and one in liberal arts from St. John's College.



Hodari Ali is the late founder and proprietor of the Pyramid Bookstore chain of bookstores and the father of co-Executive Producer, Sadiq Ali. Founded in December of 1981, Pyramid Bookstore (later "Bookstores") became a mainstay for community members and college students alike on Georgia Avenue in Northwest, Washington, DC, two blocks north of the famed and historic Howard University, aka the Mecca.



Subjects 1 and 2 as characters will be former FBI agents who were involved in the Black bookstore investigations of years past. These agents' identities were unredacted as part of our team's FOIA requests. Their involvement will add significant context on the extent of the government's plot to monitor and potentially subvert the movement of Black bookstores and their ultimate growth and influence.



Everyone's Place
Baltimore, MD



Pyramid Bookstore
Washington, DC

W WISH LIST

GUEST STAR CONTRIBUTORS

Our team intends to reach out to these influencers to braid together additional cultural aspects that Black bookstores influenced, especially hip hop and media.

- Talib Kweli
- KRS-One
- Rakim
- The GZA (from Wu-Tang Clan)
- Sadat X and/or Lord Jamar (Brand Nubian)
- Dr. Umar Johnson



PROSPECTIVE INFLUENCER CONTRIBUTORS

GUEST STAR CONTRIBUTORS

Our team intends to reach out to these influencers to braid together additional cultural aspects that Black bookstores influenced, especially hip hop and media.

- Marc Lamont Hill
- Ta-Nehisi Coates
- Michael Eric Dyson
- Jeffrey Wright
- Chuck D
- Nas



Karibu Books #3
Bowie, MD



Third World Press
Chicago, IL

KEY TEAM MEMBERS



Karim Ali will serve as Co-Executive Producer and research contributor. Karim will provide overall media expression direction which will encompass aspects of the cinematic approach, photography, music/scoring, editing, writing and design production. Karim has had a long career in Media Expressionism and storytelling with socially conscious institutions, organizations.



Sadiq Ali will serve as Co-Executive Producer and Co-Director for the project. Sadiq will also be responsible for casting and overall artistic direction. Sadiq is an author, speaker, social impact sector leader and entrepreneur who grew up in a household filled with books by a father who founded and owned Black bookstores.



Dr. Joshua Clark Davis will serve as lead historian for the project. As he has led extensive research on the film's core subject area, Dr. Davis will support in casting. He also serves as assistant professor of American history at the University of Baltimore focusing on social movements, policing, capitalism, and African American history.

KIKEY TEAM MEMBERS



Dayvon Love, Director of Public Policy, Leaders of a Beautiful Struggle (Baltimore, MD) will serve as Cultural and Historical Consultant for the project. A historian, author and national champion debater and coach, Dayvon will provide historical context and analysis. Dayvon's work has been featured heavily across national media.



Marcel Martin bka "Kariz Marcel" is a New York-born, Baltimore-Virginia raised music producer and social entrepreneur. His roots sprouted from 90's Hip-Hop, Go-Go (DC) and Baltimore Club Music. In 2008 he founded Kariz Kids Youth Enrichment Services, an afterschool program focused on music production that ran for over 10 years. In 2018 he landed a major music placement on Jidenna's '85 To Africa' album with the song 'Sou Sou'. It was co-produced by 7G, a young prodigy that was once his student in Kariz Kids.

PROSPECTIVE CO-DIRECTORS

Mobolaji Olambiwonnu
Recent Work: **Ferguson Rises**

Lagueria Davis
Recent Work: **Black Barbie**

Nofisat Almaroof
Recent Work: **Crown**

INTENTED AUDIENCE + IMPACT

AUDIENCE

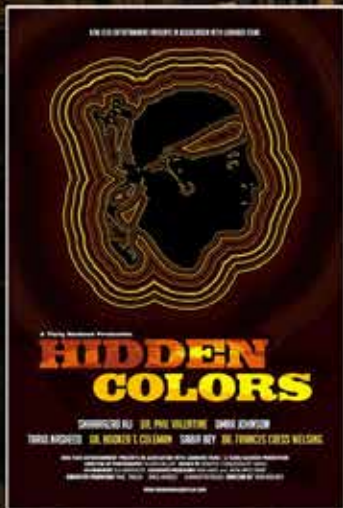
- NDR is intended primarily for African American audiences from high school aged students on to seniors
- The core of the audience is interested in learning untold stories of African American history, political and social movements and Black culture in America
- Some audience members will be interested in the 'conspiracy theory' elements of our story
- Special emphasis will be on HS and college students and young adults who are not aware of this history; this focus will also allow for campus and school district screenings as part of our marketing and distribution strategy

IMPACT

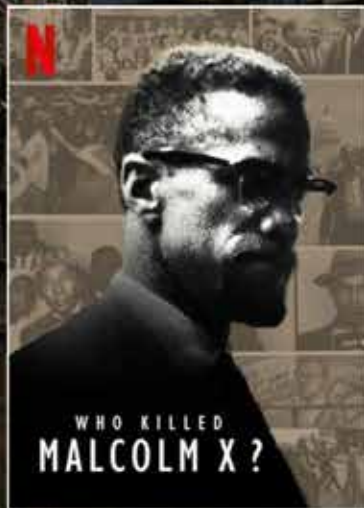
- NDR is intended to excite and sadden audiences about the history of the Black book store in America
- NDR will encourage younger viewers, especially HS and college students, to read more and understand that African Americans have a powerful and distinct intellectual legacy that is not often enough portrayed
- We also wish to highlight, with new focus, just how insidious and hateful the federal government (FBI) was when it came to surveilling and potentially sabotaging important social movements led by Black folks
- Lastly, we want to encourage renewed support for existing Black owned book stores

COMPARABLES

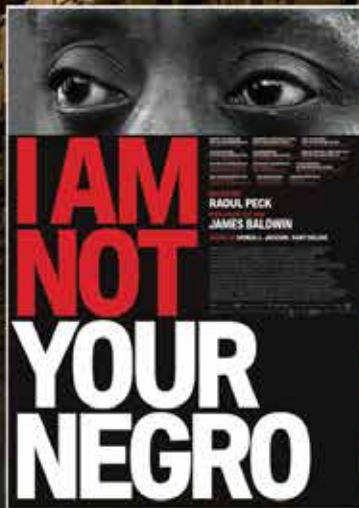
WHAT ARE RECENTLY MADE FILMS SIMILAR TO THIS ONE?



Budget: \$150K
Box office: \$xxM



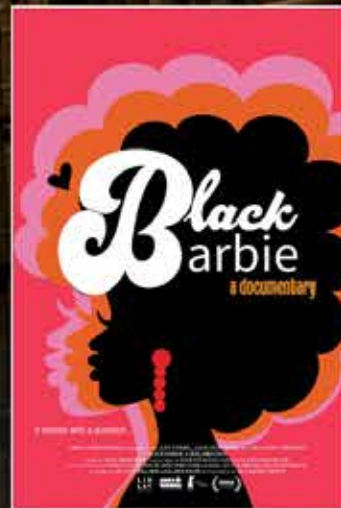
Budget: \$1.2M
Box office: unreleased



Budget: \$1M
Box office: \$9.6M



Budget: \$xxM
Box office: \$xxM



Budget: \$xxM
Box office: \$xxM

MAMARKETING + DISTRIBUTION

MARKETING

- Major film festival submissions, including
 - American Black Film Festival
 - Sundance Film Festival
 - DOC NYC
 - AFI Fest
 - International Documentary Fest Amsterdam (IDFA)
- Cultural screenings & talkbacks via strategic partner sponsorships, e.g. Museums of African American History and Culture; community cinemas; etc.
- Holistic strategy for campus screenings, talk backs, etc. with Black/Africana studies departments
- Additional strategy for HS and school district social studies departments
- Leverage network created via crowdfunding campaign

DISTRIBUTION

- Networks that specialize in documentaries, i.e. Hulu, Netflix, History Channel
- Special emphasis on Public Television (CPB/PBS)
- Post-university screenings; work to secure educational distribution with focus on 150+ HBCUs (historically black colleges & universities)
- Educational conference circuit will be key focus for distribution
- Secure VOD agreement

PR PRIVATE INVESTOR OVERVIEW EW

Our goal is to raise \$75,000 of private investment via our friends and family network. These funds will support the following development activities, including but not limited to:

- Establishment of new production company entity
- Director sign on bonus
- Complete trailer ahead of crowdfunding campaign launch
- Initial photography & location research
- Archival & historical research

Level 1: Up to \$5,000

- Special investor recognition on NDR website
- VIP access to local film screening
- Advance film access and directors cut

Level 2: \$5,000 to \$10,000

- All L1 perks
- Up to 10% ROI
- VIP admin

Level 3: \$10,000 to \$25,000

- All L1-2 perks

Level 4: \$25,000 and up

- All L1-3 perks
- Executive producer credit
- Profit sharing potential (equity)

BUBU BUDGET - PROJECTED REVENUE

ACCT.	DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
100	Grant 1	\$25,000
	Grant 2	\$10,000
200	Broadcaster 1	\$75,000
	Broadcaster 2	\$50,000
300	Private Investors	\$50,000
400	Crowdfunding	\$355,307
500	Producer Cash	\$8000
600	Funding gap/amount still to be raised	\$0
	GRAND TOTAL	\$573,307

BUBUDGET - PROJECTED EXPENSES

EXPENSES			
ACCT.	DESCRIPTION		AMOUNT
1000	Project Development		45,000
2000	Producing Staff		78,000
3000	Rights, Music & Talent		52,000
4000	Staff		10,000
5000	Production Expenses		78,835
6000	Travel		15,000
7000	Post-Production		75,000
8000	Insurance		10,000
9000	Office & Administration		18,000
9000	Publicity, Promotion, Website, Festivals, Impact, Distribution		45,000
SUB TOTAL			426,835
CONTINGENCY		10.0%	140,972
FISCAL SPONSOR FEE (applied to grants only)		5.0%	5,500
GRAND TOTAL			\$573,307

PROJECTED TIMELINE

ITEM	LENGTH	UNIT	PROJECTED TIMING
Private Fundraising	12	weeks	1000
Trailer Production	12	weeks	1000
Launch Crowdfunding Campaign	12	weeks	1000
Additional Research & Prep:	12	weeks	1000
Shoot:	70	days (over 24 weeks)	1000
Edit:	20	weeks	1000
Finishing/Post:	8	weeks	1000
			1000
TOTAL WEEKS:	80 WEEKS		
TOTAL MONTHS:	20 MONTHS		

THANK YOU

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Sadiq Ali - sadiqali.business@gmail.com

Karim Ali - aalianetwork@gmail.com

Obelisk Productions LLC



OBELISK
PRODUCTIONS

JOIN OUR MAILING LIST: WWW.NDRFILM.COM