

Five Secrets to
taking your play from
Page to Stage and
becoming a

**Successful
Playwright**

CRYSTAL L. BASS

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Hi, I'm Crystal L. Bass. I want to give you a little bit of background about me.

I am a national playwright and author. As a child, I discovered that I had the gifts of writing, storytelling, and performing. I developed these gifts at community events, plays and recitals as an actress, performer and choreographer. Later in life, I moved to Los Angeles, California where I would transform the personal struggles of my life to create depth in my performances and in my writing. I had the opportunity to work on independent projects as well as big budget films. I was cast as a body double for Regina King in the movie "Enemy of the State" starring Will Smith, and as a result, I successfully earned my Screen Actors Guild membership. Working with Regina King was a dream. I later doubled and performed some of her stunts in the action thriller "Truth Be Told" starring Regina King and Blair Underwood. I also worked on a host of TV shows and commercials as a wardrobe assistant and various other positions.

My life's work is rooted in the desire to raise awareness and inspire people to fulfill their true purpose. Throughout my career, I've used my platform to uncover and illuminate issues that are important to young women, to ultimately empower and strengthen them.

A tragic life-changing event brought me back to Baltimore and my Hollywood dreams came to a screeching halt. So, I thought—how can I turn this negative experience into something positive. I decided to go back to school and finish my degree. I'd already had an Associates Degree. But I wanted to go back and get my bachelors. I wanted to be the very first person in my family to do so...and I was. Although school fulfilled me and I graduated at the top of my class, there was still something missing.

So, in 2010, I founded Crystal Clear Publications. A publishing house where I could self-publish my work and tell my stories in a fashion that would showcase my unique storytelling style. Crystal Clear Publications boasts of a creative team of artists, editors, professors, and producers that work to assist me in transforming my works into published manuscripts, plays and soon—films. My goal is to expand my publishing company and publish other talented writers who share my desire to inspire through

their stories. My first novel, published under my very own publishing company is called "Dark Clouds: A Charm City Family's Struggle." The story chronicles the lives of four siblings, their relationship with their mother, and the many incidents that took place during their childhood.

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I'd always had dreams of self-publishing a book, turning it into a play, then a movie. Three years after the release of my first book, I attended a theater conference in Chicago. At this conference, I had one goal in mind. To team up with the "God-Father of Urban Theater", Mr. Shelly Garrett to fulfill my dream of turning my novel into a stage play. And just like that, it happened. With Shelly's twenty-seven years of experience and my remarkable story, my newest company, Crystal L. Bass Entertainment produced and toured nationally, what became my hit stage play.

My biggest accomplishment to date was the tour of my stage production called, "Ain't No Love Like A Mother's Love." As I toured around the country with my production, I was compelled and inspired to provide an outlet that would encourage, equip and empower people all over the world. In 2013, I was honored and recognized by Reverend Jesse Jackson and the Rainbow Push Coalition as a Top Inspirational and Engaged Leader. Which is why I am here. I am here talking to you because so many people call and ask me how I did it? So many people have been inspired. I want to share with you the secrets of my success. Because if I can do it, you can too!

The first secret is to Master Your Craft.

That's something you must really focus on. And, let me tell you, it is not easy. You can never stop learning. Educate yourself. Learn as much as you can about what it means to be a successful playwright. The process takes a long time so be patient with yourself as you learn. In order to master your craft, you will need to read many, many scripts. You are reading to see how other seasoned playwrights resolve issues. There is always a formula—there's an ongoing problem that will be solved by the end of the show. You'll need to see how the characters are built and developed—how are they introduced to you? How does the plot thicken? How is the plot developed throughout the story? How does the climax build? You'll also need to take as many classes as you can afford. A part of learning your craft is investing in it. You'll need to learn valuable information from other playwrights.

Attend workshops. You can never attend enough. When I was randomly sent an email for that workshop in Chicago, I knew that I was going no matter what it was going to cost me. I called a few people and offered them a free trip to Chi-town. I said, listen...I will pay for a hotel suite, roundtrip airfare and a rental car. I ended up taking Raevyn

Jones and Thea Washington. They were my eyes and ears. I knew that there would be a lot of info and I wanted all of it. Raevyn and Thea were there to hear anything that I didn't hear and see anything that I may have missed. That's when you know someone is serious about mastering their craft! And once we told folks at the conference that story, they knew that I was serious too! So, the rest was history!

Read as many books as you can about how to become a playwright.

The more you are homed in your field, the more you will stand out.

The more value you have as a creator, the more you can charge. You can't just halfway know what you are doing because it will show in your production. And, people will demand a refund!

The 2nd secret is to Know the Field...

For you to know the field inside and out, you need to attend plays. Pay attention to the set, the wardrobe, the lighting, and the sound. Theater has a language of its own and you must know the terminology. Where is downstage? Where is upstage? Which way is stage right and stage left? What about house right and house left? What about the front of the house or back of the house? What does it mean to scale the house?

Get involved in some local theater groups so that you can learn the ins and outs. There are all sorts of jobs that you can do in a theater to learn the behind the scenes.

Get some subscriptions. Go to Playscripts, DPS (Dramatics Play Service), Sam French, Broadway Play Publishing and get on their email lists or just browse the sites.

Also, look up some of the people whose work you admire. For me, it was Shelly Garrett. You may be a Tyler Perry, David E. Talbert or Je'Caryous Johnson fan to name a few.

The 3rd secret is — Network...

Network and build your net worth. Don't just attend conferences. But while you are there, introduce yourself to the actors, directors, producers and playwrights. Make it your business to speak to the folks who are there to host the panels. Always make sure to have your business cards available.

Also, target the theaters you'd like to play at. Contact those people. Set up an appointment to go by there and meet the staff. I got to know the Operations Managers at each of the venues that I played at. When I schedule a show in a city, I call ahead and schedule a tour. I travel to the town and make magic happen. I go to the radio stations that are in the area where I am scheduling a show. I ask them— "Hey, can I get on the

mic and greet your listeners to let them know that I'm coming?" I start the work early! I meet the people in the radio stations and TV stations too. I make them my best friends! I offer them VIP treatment, backstage passes, giveaways and more. I also network when I'm out scouting talent. I go to karaoke bars to seek singers. You'd be surprised at the talent you can find! Find networking events in the field that you want to go in but think outside of the box. Don't limit yourself.

The 4th secret is — Find a mentor...

The road to theatrical success is a tough one. But a mentor can help you navigate that road more smoothly. A mentor has a vested interest in seeing you succeed. That person will be there through the ups and downs of your career. Choose a mentor whose work inspires you...someone whose footsteps you wish to follow. Having a mentor is critical to your success. You are going to hit a few roadblocks. It is inevitable. It's likely that you will fail a few times before you succeed. But a good mentor will help to soften some of the blows. And, it's a good idea to have someone to call and ask for advice. Things are going to go wrong. It's theater—things fall apart and people in theater are dramatic.

Some of the benefits of having a theatrical mentor are:

- You'll have someone to bounce your crazy, creative ideas off.
- A mentor can help assess your strengths and weaknesses.
- A mentor will help you to achieve your potential.
- You can gain from your mentor's expertise.
- A mentor will encourage you.
- A mentor will offer you tips and advice.
- A mentor can help you to avoid some of the mistakes that they've made!
- You can receive critical feedback from your mentor.
- A mentor will help you to develop professionally.
- You'll have someone to confide in because fear will set in. Your mentor will know exactly what you are going through.
- And most importantly, a mentor will hold you accountable. That person will motivate you to do your best work and push you past your limits.

The 5th secret is— Keep Control of Your Script...

This is a big one and I saved the best for last! It is ok to be open to suggestions. However, this is one of the reasons that I self-published my novels and why I chose to do my own play. I was not interested in finding a publisher for my play at all. I am not interested in anyone telling me how to tell my story. As soon as you send your script out to be read, someone from the sound guy to the actors are going to ask you to change this or change that. I am open to things that have to do with production. If the sound guy tells me that I should incorporate an ambulance sound or that I should add a phone ringing into the music, then I'll take the suggestion. However, if someone is attempting to change the

dialogue that I've written, that's another story. Now, if you have a profane word in the script...for example, "What in the hell were you thinking?" If the actor requested to change the line to, "What in the heck are you thinking?" that's fine. I'm willing to compromise there. That one slight change does not change the meaning of the story

If you're dream is to become a national playwright, you must learn from the people who are doing it at the capacity that you want to do it. If I can do it, you can too! It takes a lot of dedication, and it takes a lot of money. I did whatever it took to raise money for my dream. First, I ran an Indiegogo Campaign. Then, I sold my designer bags and shoes on eBay and at consignment shops because I saw the bigger picture. I didn't mind chasing conferences and attending every play that I could afford, because I saw light at the end of the tunnel. I knew that it was all a part of my learning, my growth, and my investment into my future.

If you are ready to become a successful playwright, sign up for the Page To Stage course TODAY!

If you have questions, book a **FREE consultation!**



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