



Crowdfunded Thriller is Amazon Child Abuse Bestseller

Survivors, critics praise M. Dolon Hickmon's riveting and accessible approach to the issues of child abuse and recovery.

LEESBURG, FLORIDA, USA, May 19, 2014 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Hailed as "[a smart, well-written thriller](#)" that "reads like a Hollywood blockbuster", M. Dolon Hickmon's debut novel, 13:24 – A Story of Faith and Obsession, has racked up an impressive number of five star reviews. But the page-turning narrative also examines a serious theme: "There are textbooks that explain the scientific mechanisms that underpin post-traumatic stress disorder," wrote Dr. Kim Etherington, a trauma researcher and Bristol University emeritus professor, "but this book tells a story that reaches out to help us all understand."

Hickmon says, "I was fairly certain that a publisher would ask me to soften the core material about surviving and recovering from childhood trauma." So rather than sign with a literary agent, the author took his project to the public.

"Backers received e-books, autographed first editions, and even mentions in the book's acknowledgments," Hickmon said.

The crowdfunding campaign also attracted influential supporters: "I was invited to write a guest post for the spiritual abuse survivors' blog No Longer Quivering. That post was quoted in an article that became a front page feature on Salon," Hickmon said. Talk show producers reached out, and interviews soon aired in Seattle, New York, Washington DC, and Miami.

On October 2, 2013, the crowdfunding campaign closed, having exceeded the author's goal.

Hickmon commissioned a photo-illustrated cover from Kirk DouPonce, of DogEared Design. "Some of the authors I've gotten to design covers for include John MacArthur, Karen Kingsbury, Ted Dekker, Tosca Lee, and Frank Peretti," DouPonce shared via email.

Through the Editor's Freelance Association, Hickmon retained the services of Miranda Ottewell, a HarperCollins veteran whose editing credits include recent bestsellers like Daniel Silva's *The English Girl*, Elizabeth Gilbert's *The Signature of All Things*, and Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behavior*.

The team's efforts paid off: Writing for the Mid-West Book Review, e-book reviewer Diane Donovan offered unabashed praise: "For some readers, this account of obsession, abuse, and redemption could strike too close to home; but those who want a hard-hitting, emotionally charged crime story should place this near the top of their reading list." A similarly positive assessment came in the March 1, 2014 edition of notoriously harsh Kirkus Reviews print magazine.

Hickmon says, "I worked with a professional publicist at Ascot Media. In addition to invitations for major market radio interviews, their efforts netted online exposure that moved 13:24 beyond the typical child abuse audience."

More humbling were the private letters and public praise that the author received from other child abuse survivors: "In places, it felt like Josh was explaining my childhood, with better words than I would have come up with," wrote one survivor, who maintains a blog called Ramblings of Sheldon. And on the website of Homeschoolers Anonymous, community coordinator R.L. Stollar wrote, "I could not console myself by saying, 'This is fiction.' It isn't, as anyone who has experienced child abuse will recognize."

On May 15, 2014, Hickmon's innovative thriller became a genre bestseller, having broken into [Amazon's Top 100 paid e-book titles](#) in the 'Child Abuse' category.

Hickmon is thrilled with his accomplishment, but wants to take 13:24's message to an even bigger audience. "Because of my own history of childhood maltreatment, I can't help thinking about those who are still living in abusive environments. That gives me the energy to keep pushing on."

Asked about negative responses, the author said, "One reviewer described my novel as 'probably the most disturbing book' she'd ever read—and she didn't mean it as a compliment. But she also said that she finished it because she wanted to know the end of the story. To me, that signifies success more than a boatload of five star reviews

"I want everyone to have a realistic concept of the victim's perspective--both as a child and as an adult--when they are asked to serve on the jury for a physical abuse case, or are given the chance to vote on a child abuse law. I tried to handle the issues as sensitively as possible while also being honest; but readers have to want to understand the problem more than they want to avoid being uncomfortable."

13:24 – A Story of Faith and Obsession is available at [Amazon](#), Barnes and Noble, and other retailers worldwide.

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