

'TJ Crowley' Full-Cast Audio Drama Wins Prestigious AudioFile Earphones Award

THE REAL EDUCATION OF TJ CROWLEY has been honored with an AudioFile Earphones Award, a mark of excellence that guarantees an exceptional audio experience.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK, US, June 20, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- "The Real Education of TJ

“

This audio drama details racial strife in...in 1968. A seventh-grade boy's life becomes upended when a Black family moves in next door. The narrators of this fraught coming-of-age story are excellent.”

AudioFile Magazine

Crowley: Coming of Age on the Redline" has been honored with the prestigious Earphones Award from AudioFile Magazine, a mark of excellence that guarantees an exceptional audio experience. Announced today, the award was accompanied by a glowing review, solidifying this full-cast [audio drama](#) as a standout in the audiobook industry: "This audio drama details racial strife in Wichita, Kansas, in 1968. A seventh-grade boy's life becomes upended when a Black family moves in next door. The narrators of this fraught coming-of-age story are excellent."

“For over three decades, AudioFile has been the guiding light for narrators, producers, directors, and listeners alike,” said executive producer and co-author Grant Overstake, publisher of Grain Valley Publishing Company, LLC. “This award is a testament to the talent and hard work of our amazing cast and crew who brought TJ’s story to life.”

Led by co-author, producer, and director May Wuthrich and produced at John Marshall Media, the audio drama features a 15-member cast, including Dani Martineck as TJ Crowley, Dion Graham, Tavia Gilbert, Johnny Heller, Kevin R. Free, Shayna Small, Ari Fliakos, Michael Crouch, Kirby Heyborne, Graham Halstead, Peter Berkrot, Thérèse Plummer, Brittany Pressley, John Wright, and Sheila Brown Kinnard, playing a role inspired by her own mother

Distributed by Blackstone Publishing, this gripping and fast-paced audio drama vividly portrays the hopes and fears of the turbulent Civil Rights era. The story centers on 13-year-old TJ, a white boy from a broken home whose life is disrupted when the Fair Housing Act dismantles the redline dividing the city, and new Black neighbors, including Dr. Robert Washington, his wife Lorraine, and their teenage daughter, Ivy, move next door to the racist Crowley family.

Overstake, a Wichita native and former Miami Herald sportswriter, grew up along the city's redline during the peak of the Civil Rights movement. His personal experiences, woven with historic events that shaped the nation, inspired his acclaimed novel, which was named Book of the Year by the Kansas Authors Club and National Book of the Month by Bookclubs.com.

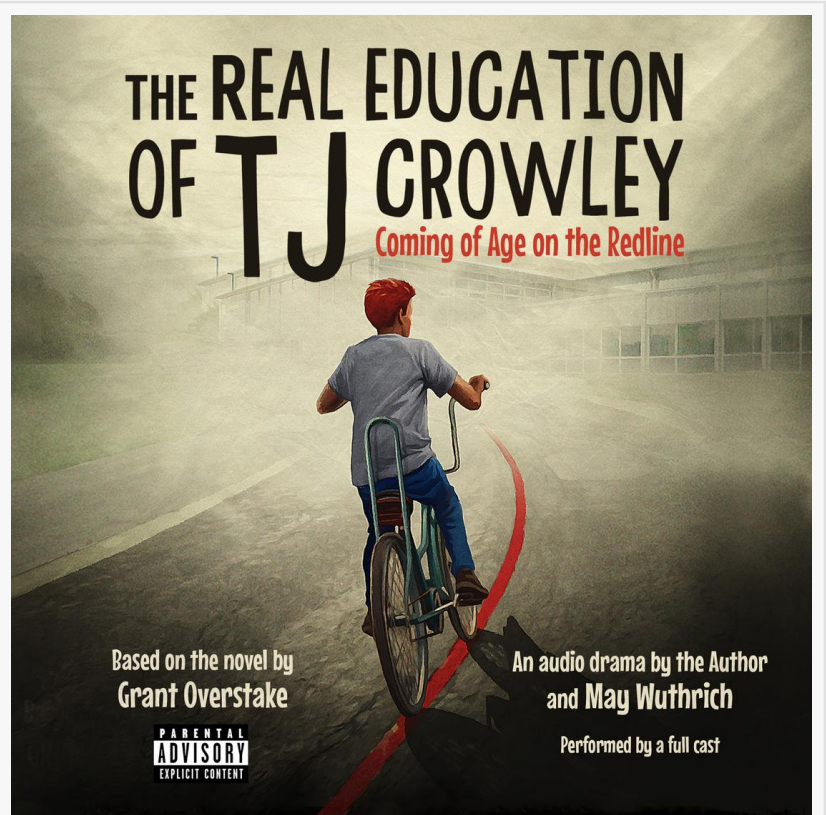
For Overstake and Grain Valley Publishing, the AudioFile Earphones Award marks a significant first. Meanwhile, for Wuthrich, her cast, and the production team at John Marshall Media, it is yet another accolade among many, highlighting their status as recognized leaders in the audiobook industry.

The audio drama debuted on June 11th as the #1 New Release in the [Historical Fiction](#) for Teens category on Audible.com, signaling its potential to reach a wide audience eager for content that is rich in meaning and offers a suspenseful story that keeps listeners on the edge of their seats.

A premier listening event for the audio drama was held in Wichita on June 9th, sponsored by Fidelity Bank and Arts Council Wichita, and hosted by Carla Eckels of KMUW, an NPR affiliate, with community support from the Kansas African American Museum and the ARISE Ensemble. The event took place in the same community where the story is set, and was well-attended, with an audience of educators, civil rights leaders, and local community members, who were moved by and celebrated the story's deep roots in local history and its powerful reflection on the Civil Rights era.

FROM THE AUDIOFILE REVIEW OF "TJ CROWLEY"

"... The narrators of this fraught coming-of-age story are excellent. To pick just three: Dani Martineck, as TJ, has just the right tone and delivery; Dion Graham excels as the Black Doctor, the new next-door neighbor, as does Tavia Gilbert as TJ's boozy, racist mom. The gospel music of the ARISE Ensemble enhances the listening experience. The audio drama has moments of remarkable verisimilitude: from the play-by-play announcing of a basketball game to the whirring of a helicopter in Vietnam. Performed by a gifted cast, this slice of our history stays with the listener. - A.D.M., Winner of AudioFile Earphones Award" – AUDIOFILE (Full Review)



Cover art for The Real Education of TJ Crowley audio drama

PROJECT HISTORY

In 2020, Overstake and Wuthrich, an award-winning director and producer with 400 titles to her credit, embarked on the ambitious project of adapting the novel into a three-act audio drama, complete with sound effects and music. Their goal was to preserve the essence of the novel while adding scenes and immersive elements that enhanced the story. To achieve this, they collaborated with the New York City-based, award-winning production company John Marshall Media (JMM), whose production wizardry, led by producer Cameron Potts, ensured meticulous sound design, editing, and mastering.

"The combined efforts of all are evident in every aspect of the audio drama," Overstake said. "The Earphones Award and stellar review are fitting tributes to May, her outstanding cast, and the JMM team. It's a great feeling to know that our work over these past four years is out there, being heard and appreciated. We look forward to seeing what happens next for this remarkable story."

OUR SPONSORS & PATRONS

The audio project was made possible by the fiscal sponsorship of the Youth Educational Empowerment Program (YEEP), with funding from Shocker Studios at Wichita State University, and the Kansas Creative Arts Industries Commission, which receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional support came from The Lenox Foundation, The Stecher Family Foundation, Massachusetts Mutual Insurance Co., Bird by Bird Outreach, and the following individuals: Abbe F. Large, Mike and Sally Harris, Marcia Ross and Jeff Kaufman, Michael Simon, Michael Birzer, Gretchen Eick and Michael Poage, and Sarah Bagby.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

To request a review copy, please contact Tavia Gilbert, project co-producer, at tavia@talkboxproductions.com.

To learn more about the audio drama, visit TJCrowleyAudioDrama.com.

To schedule an interview with Grant Overstake, please contact the author at grainvalleypress@gmail.com.

Audiobook downloads available for review listeners

Content Advisory - Rated PG: Age 13+

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