

Blackstone Publishing to Release Audiobook of “Huckleberry Jim” During Banned Books Week — PW BookLife Editor’s Pick

Debut novel by Adam Nelson heralded as “an incisive, provocative, and robustly American debut.” International rights on offer at 2026 Frankfurt Book Fair.

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Workhouse Editions today announced that [Blackstone Publishing](#) will produce the unabridged audiobook of [Huckleberry Jim](#), a Publishers Weekly BookLife Editor’s Pick, and the debut novel by Adam Nelson, on October 6, 2026, alongside the hardcover, trade paperback, and ebook editions. Blackstone will release the audiobook wide on publication day, available from day one across Audible, Amazon, Spotify, Apple, Libro.fm, Chirp, Audiobooks.com, and more than 150 digital retail and library partners, including OverDrive and Hoopla.



Inspired by real events and set in 1991, *Huckleberry Jim* follows two actors — Axel Emerson, a twenty-two-year-old white actor fresh out of conservatory, and Moses Morton, a fifty-five-year-old Black actor with a lifetime of stages behind him — on a children’s tour of *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* through upstate New York and the Appalachians. As the two-man company drives from school gymnasium to community theater, performing Twain’s text to American children in the year of Anita Hill, the Rodney King brutality, and the height of the culture wars, the road between them becomes a slow accounting of race, performance, fatherhood, and what it costs to play another man’s part.

A reckoning with race, guilt, and the bedtime stories America tells itself to sleep at night. For readers of Percival Everett’s *James* and Paul Beatty’s *The Sellout*.

The audiobook will be narrated by Leon Nixon under senior audio producer Grover Gardner, with an introduction recorded by the author.

“Huckleberry Jim is about performance, but it is equally about what survives after the performance ends,” said Adam Nelson. “The tension between those two truths is the heartbeat of the novel, and Blackstone understood that an audio edition could make that tension impossible not to hear. We are thrilled by the partnership and could not have asked for better hands.”

“Huckleberry Jim is a sharp, darkly funny, and deeply relevant novel that takes on race, identity, and the stories America tells about itself,” added Anne Fonteneau, Chief Sales Officer at Blackstone. “Adam Nelson has created two unforgettable characters in Axel and Moses, and we’re thrilled to bring their complicated journey to life in audio with Leon Nixon’s powerful performance.”



A Publishers Weekly BookLife Editor's Pick

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*Anne Fonteneau, Chief Sales
Officer at Blackstone
Publishing*

Huckleberry Jim has been named an Editor's Pick by BookLife Reviews, the Publishers Weekly imprint. Read the Editor's Pick <https://booklife.com/project/huckleberry-jim-108347>

Advance Praise

“An incisive, provocative, and robustly American debut ... capturing the spirit of Twain, social commentary marks every page with a steady stream of cleverly worded aphorisms and elegant analogies. Nelson honors the fathoms-deep American divisions that Twain marked and urges us to look closer rather than away.” — BookLife

Reviews, Publishers Weekly (Editor's Pick)

“At the story's core is an interesting and convincing relationship. Nelson is adept at character development.” — BlueInk Review

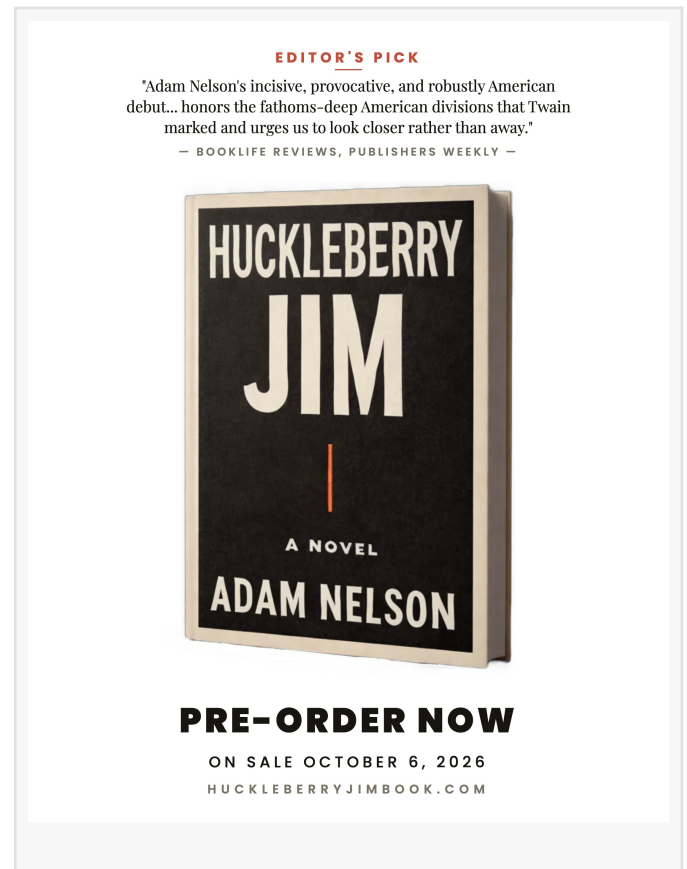
“A blunt historical novel about the power — and limitations — of the arts to educate, connect, effect change, or create an escape. A thorny discussion about book censorship ... is a

discomfiting highlight.” — Clarion Reviews

The novel was longlisted for The Masters Review Novel Excerpt Prize, placing in the top three percent of submissions, and carries the Authors Guild “Human Authored” certification.

Publication During Banned Books Week and Columbus Day Weekend

Huckleberry Jim will publish on October 6, 2026 — in the middle of Banned Books Week (October 4–10) and Columbus Day weekend, the observance commemorating the arrival on this land. Publication also falls during the 150th anniversary year of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer and in America’s Semiquincentennial year. Adventures of Huckleberry Finn remains one of the most-challenged books in United States history.



In advance of publication, Nelson’s op-ed “The Word We Won’t Say and the Country We Won’t See” — on Twain, censorship, and American language — appeared in The [Village Voice](#).

Adam Nelson is available for bookstore Q&As, readings, and signings, and for library and festival appearances during the Banned Books Week window and throughout the fall.

International Rights at the Frankfurt Book Fair

International rights to Huckleberry Jim will be on offer at the Frankfurt Book Fair, October 7–11, 2026. Blackstone Publishing will exhibit at its own stand, and Workhouse Editions will additionally be represented at the IBPA Cooperative Booth, with a single-title display in the IBPA Frankfurt Catalog distributed to foreign rights agents from 131 countries. Rights inquiries may be directed to Kat Carlson at Workhouse Editions in advance of or during the Fair.

Pre-Orders Open Now

Pre-orders for Huckleberry Jim are open now through Ingram and Baker & Taylor, and at Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshop.org, and independent booksellers nationwide.

A limited first-edition signed hardcover, autographed by the author, will be available exclusively through [huckleberryjimbook.com](#) while supplies last.

Review copies are available in physical and digital editions.

Formats and Availability

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Adam Nelson has lived at the intersection of performance and American storytelling for more than three decades — as an actor, filmmaker, and founder of Workhouse, the New York public relations agency he has run since 1999, representing filmmakers, artists, and cultural institutions. A professor at the New Jersey Film Academy, he is a merit winner of the Writer's Digest International Screenplay Competition and co-founder of Socko! Magazine, recently recognized for Best eMagazine.

Blackstone Publishing

Founded in 1987 by Craig and Michelle Black in a Southern Oregon garage, Blackstone Publishing is a truly independent, privately owned publisher with offices on both coasts. Today, Blackstone is one of America's fastest-growing publishing houses, with multiple New York Times bestsellers, Grammy Award-winning audio productions, and books placed on the New York Times Best Books of the Year list. Blackstone titles are printed at company headquarters in Ashland, Oregon, with paper sourced from mills that use responsibly managed forests, minimal chemicals, and renewable energy. Learn more at blackstonepublishing.com

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