



Sex sells...until it doesn't.

Naughty **BOOKS**



a documentary by
AUSTEN ELEANORE RACHLIS

"NAUGHTY BOOKS" EDITED BY CANDICE NACHMAN ORIGINAL MUSIC BY CATHERINE JOY CINEMATOGRAPHY BY NAUSHEEN DADABHOY
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PRODUCED BY KATE BUHRMASTER AND AUSTEN ELEANORE RACHLIS DIRECTED BY AUSTEN ELEANORE RACHLIS

Cinequest

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Promo photos available [here](#)

NAUGHTY BOOKS

A Documentary by Austen Eleanore Rachlis

Sex sells...until it doesn't

Naughty Books is a feature-length documentary about the boom of self-published romance novels in the wake of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. It follows three authors who became millionaires in under a year using pen names to sell erotica online for \$1.99. Along the way, they upended the book industry, challenged ideas of female sexuality, and re-imagined the American Dream for the 21st century.

In 2011, British television producer E.L. James published the erotic novel *Fifty Shades of Grey*. It became a cultural phenomenon, selling 100 million copies worldwide and taking erotica mainstream. Once a genre consumed in secret, explicit romances were now being read on the subway, by the pool, and on the treadmill.

As it turned out, women weren't only reading erotica in large numbers; they were also writing it. Thanks to Amazon's Kindle store, which allowed writers to upload directly to the marketplace, women were able to publish independently, bypassing traditional gatekeepers like agents and editors. Readers were hungry for books like *Fifty Shades*, but the major publishers responded slowly. Self-published authors filled the void, flooding the market with \$1.99 books about innocent women and bad-boy billionaires falling in love and having steamy sex. Readers devoured them. The authors became a force, challenging conventional feminist ideas and disrupting publishing.

Naughty Books follows three writers who experienced overnight success, gaining tens of thousands of fans and securing lucrative deals with major publishers.

As more people saw erotic romance as an easy path to success, though, the market became saturated with hundreds of novels every month. Our authors' paths diverged. One broke into the mainstream, with books in Walmart. Another crumbled under the weight of expectations and was paralyzed with writer's block for two years. A third saw each book sell worse than the previous one and worked desperately to win back her readership.

In a world where #MeToo dominates the headlines and predatory behavior is pervasive, this film celebrates women reclaiming their sexuality on their own terms.

Total Run Time: 82 minutes
Dialogue Spoken: English
Production Location: USA
Aspect ratio: 16x9 | 1.78:1
Exhibition Format: DCP

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT:

In 2013, I was aware of *Fifty Shades of Grey*, but I had no idea how groundbreaking it was until a colleague at the literary agency where I work began representing an author named Emily Snow. Twenty-six years old with four children, she wrote her first romance novel with the hope of making a thousand dollars to buy Christmas presents. She made six figures in less than a month. I learned that she and three of her friends who had similar levels of success were organizing a convention in Las Vegas, featuring more than 100 self-published romance writers. They estimated that 1,500 fans from all over the world would attend, making it the largest event of its kind at the time. I knew I had to shoot it.

Summer 2013 turned out to be the peak of popularity for self-published romance novels. The boom soon ended, and as we continued to shoot over the next four years, it became clear that this movie was not about the rise of these books; it was about what happens after the bubble bursts. What does success demand of you? When do you decide to quit? How do you block out the world around you to keep writing?

On the surface, this may seem like a small subject, but *Naughty Books* is a story about a phenomenon – the popularity of the romance novel – that is both huge and hidden and speaks volumes about women in this country. It is a story about women and their sexuality, specifically working-class women from small towns and middle-America suburbs – the kind of people the media all too frequently ignores or, worse, belittles. The themes of being seen for who you are and sharing something you were ashamed of resonate broadly. It's about women who felt marginalized making an impact by themselves.



PRIMARY SUBJECTS



KELLI MAINE: Kelli saw a business opportunity in the success of *Fifty Shades of Grey* and decided to see what she could make happen by writing her own version. Living outside Akron, Ohio, not far from where she grew up, Kelli was a command-center strategist for a telemarketing company until her first book, *Taken*, sold 60,000 copies in two months, reaching number one on the Barnes & Noble charts.

Her subsequent books, though, didn't achieve the same success, and Kelli was at a crossroads, deciding how to proceed.

SERIES: *Give and Take, Dolls and Doms, Chained*



KRISTEN PROBY: Born and raised in Whitefish, Montana, a small ski town 30 miles from the Canadian border, Kristen moved to Seattle for her second husband. She has always wanted to be a romance writer and made a brief go of it in her early 20s, but she didn't have success, and life – marriage, work, step-kids – got in the way. After reading *Fifty Shades of Grey*, Kristen decided, at 36, to try again.

SERIES: *With Me in Seattle, Love Under the Big Sky, Fusion, The Boudreaux, Bayou Magic, Romancing Manhattan*



CJ ROBERTS: An Air Force vet who lives in South Dakota and is part of a motorcycle crew with her husband, CJ writes a dark brand of romance, featuring extreme BDSM, including sex slavery and nonconsensual sex. She highlights a sub-genre that is surprisingly popular, but that many people find problematic. CJ initially published her first novel, *Captive in the Dark*, in 2011, before E.L. James published *Fifty Shades of*

Grey, but she did not find success until Amazon's algorithm suggested her book to readers of James's novel. CJ's sales increased over 200 percent and she found herself under a level of scrutiny she had not anticipated.

SERIES: *The Dark Duet*

OTHER PEOPLE FEATURED

Alexandra Alter: Publishing Reporter, *The New York Times*

Dr. Gail Dines: Professor Emerita of Sociology and Women's Studies, Wheelock College; Author, *Pornland*

Jane Dystel: Agent, Dystel, Goderich & Bourret

Rebecca Friedman: Agent, Rebecca Friedman Literary Agency

Colleen Hoover: Author; First self-published writer to hit #1 on *The New York Times* Bestseller list

Bea and Leah Koch: Owners, The Ripped Bodice, an all-romance bookstore in Los Angeles

Dr. Tania Modleski: Professor Emerita of English, University of Southern California; Author, *Loving with A Vengeance*

Laurelin Page: Bestselling author of *The Fixed Trilogy*, the only self-published book among Amazon's 2014 bestsellers

Dr. Katie Roiphe: Professor of Journalism, New York University

Emily Snow: Bestselling author of *The Devoured Series*

Michelle A. Valentine: Bestselling author of *The Black Falcon Series*

NARRATORS

Aimee Garcia (CJ Roberts Narration): Stars in *Lucifer* (Fox/Netflix) as Ella Lopez. Also known for her work in *Dexter* and *The Addams Family*.

Allison Tolman (Kelli Maine Narration): Lead in *Emergence* (ABC). Nominated for the Golden Globe for her performance as Molly Solverson in *Fargo* (FX).

Aisha Tyler (Kristen Proby Narration): Host, comedian, and actress. She voices Lana in the FX animated series *Archer* and starred in more than 85 episodes of *Criminal Minds* (CBS), along with hosting *The Talk* and *Whose Line is it Anyway?*

FILMMAKERS



Austen Eleanore Rachlis (Director/Producer) wrote the novel *Hacker Mom* as a launch title for Amazon's Kindle Serial initiative and has ghostwritten four books in a middle-grades series for Simon & Schuster. Her pilot script, "Borderlines," was optioned by Fox as part of its Writer's Initiative and her feature screenplay, "Recoil," was a semifinalist in the Nicholl Screenwriting Competition. She co-wrote the short film *Loop Planes*, which was jointly funded and produced by Killer Films and Massify.com. It premiered at SXSW and went on to screen at

more than 50 festivals worldwide, including Tribeca, The Hamptons Film Festival, and the Rhode Island International Film Festival, where it won the Alternative Spirit Award. She received the inaugural Brockman Fellowship to attend the 2016 Sundance Film Festival. Most recently she has written episodes for the podcasts "American Innovations" and "Business Wars" on Wondery.

Austen holds a BA from Hampshire College and an MFA from Columbia University's School of the Arts.



Kate Buhmaster (Producer) is a screenwriter and producer with a background in journalism and fiction. An alumna of the Producers Guild of America diversity and development program, she has pitched and prepared original projects under the guidance of top industry producers. She works as a judge for the Nicholl Fellowship screenwriting competition, and is currently developing several projects in scripted television and original features.

After graduating from Dartmouth College with a degree in Literature and Creative Writing, she moved to New York to work as a writer and producer of television news. During her years at NBC News and MSNBC, she wrote and produced for several hours of live news programming daily, covered all aspects of breaking news stories. She started helping with independent film productions in her spare time, and ended up leaving the news world to produce a feature, which premiered at the Tribeca Film Festival. She earned her MFA in Film from Columbia University's School of the Arts.



Nausheen Dadabhoy (Director of Photography) is a Pakistani-American cinematographer from Southern California. She received her MFA in Cinematography from the American Film Institute. Nausheen has lensed a number of narrative and documentary films, including *J'adore Nawal* (2018), a short for HBO Documentaries which premiered at Sundance; *La Femme et le TGV* (2016), a live action short film Oscar nominee; *War to be Her* (2016), which aired on POV; and *The Ground Beneath Their Feet* (2014), her directorial debut, which

premiered at IDFA. Nausheen's films have screened at festivals worldwide, including Toronto International Film Festival, Tribeca, AFI Fest, and Locarno, and have appeared on Netflix, PBS, MSNBC, and MTV. Nausheen has been selected as a Film Independent Project: Involve Fellow, a Berlin Talents participant, a Firelight Fellow, and a Chicken & Egg Eggcelerator Lab participant. She is based in New York, Los Angeles, and Karachi, where she has broken boundaries to become the only female cinematographer in Pakistan.



Catherine Joy (Composer) is a composer for film, media and live performance. She contributed additional arrangements on the Emmy award-winning Netflix documentary series *Wild Wild Country* and won Best Documentary Score for the uplifting feature documentary *Gold Balls*. Catherine is the founder and director of Joy Music House, providing the full range of score production services. She is also the Vice President for the Alliance for Women Film Composers.

Catherine was part of the music team on notable feature projects. She score supervised and orchestrated on *The Last Black Man In San Francisco*, which premiered in competition at Sundance 2019. She also music edited the *Joan Jett: Bad Reputation* feature, was both orchestrator and score supervisor on the Oscar-nominated *RBG*, and score supervised the HBO documentary *At The Heart of Gold*.

Catherine recently scored six episodes of the *Women of the Island Tasmanian* documentary series. She also scored the popular web series *Capitol Hill*, which is now televised throughout Europe and Canada. Catherine is currently scoring the video games *The Endless Mission* and *Beyond Blue* along with the web series *No Matter What* and feature horror film *The Parish*.



Candice Nachman (Editor) grew up in Colorado. She received her BFA in Photography from Metropolitan State University of Denver in 2010. She also has her photography and video art in the permanent collections at the Hotel Marriott in Denver and Plus Gallery in Denver. She currently resides in Los Angeles, where she completed her MFA in Film Directing from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2016. She has received numerous awards for filmmaking, including the Jack Nicholson Distinguished Student Director Award and the Hollywood Foreign Press Award.

CREDITS

Director: Austen Eleanore Rachlis

Producer: Kate Buhrmaster, Austen Eleanore Rachlis

Executive producer: Austen Eleanore Rachlis, Jason Wojciechowski

Co-Producer: Eli Van Noppen

Featuring: Kelli Maine, Kristen Proby, CJ Roberts, Alexandra Alter, Dr. Gail Dines, Jane Dystel, Rebecca Friedman, Glorja Hidalgo, Colleen Hoover, Bea Koch, Leah Koch, Dr. Tania Modleski, Laurelin Paige, Tom Paige, Dr. Katie Roiphe, Robyn Rosenberg, K.P. Simmon, Emily Snow, Michelle A. Valentine

Narration: Aimee Garcia, Allison Tolman, Aisha Tyler

Director of Photography: Nausheen Dadabhoy

Editor: Candice Nachman

Composer: Catherine Joy

Field Producers: Shaun Boyle, Ann Scharnhorst

Casting Director: Jessica Daniels, CSA

Animation: Melissa Ferrari, Michaela Müller, Danski Tang, Eirini Vianelli

Additional Photography: Nadia Hallgren, Eli Van Noppen, Leslie Bumgarner, Candice Nachman, Shaun Boyle

Sound Recordist: Kelly Ambrow

Additional Sound: Benjamin Allison, Phillip Bladh, Blake Christian, Nadia Hallgren, Noah Myers

Additional Editing: Andrzej Rattinger

Assistant Editors: Gayatri Bajpai, Eli Van Noppen

Charts: Annie Jen

Titles and Lower Thirds: Carolina Jucksch Paula

Additional Research: Cameron Bird

Percussion: Bobak Lotfipour

Additional Guitar: Casey Trela

Post-Production Supervisor: Andrzej Rattinger

Colorist: Benjamin Kantor

Supervising Sound Editor: Ugo Derouard

Sound Designer: Ugo Derouard

Re-recording Mixer: John Warrin

Dialogue Editor: Mehrnaz Mohabati

Sound Effect Editor: Justin M. Green

Voice Over Recording Engineers: Mehrnaz Mohabati, Ugosound Studios, Mike Gullickson, Studio Awesome

Production Assistants: Ariel Swartley, Maud Waterman

Transcribers: Grace Hazeltine, Elissa James, Jeanette Zhu

Legal Services: Penelope Glass

Additional Legal Services: Michael Golland

Stock Footage: Master binds the hand of a young girl submissive with rope / BDSM Theme by UVgreen used under license from [shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com)

Fifty Shades of Grey Photo by Radu Bercan used under license from [shutterstock.com](https://www.shutterstock.com)

Multi Photo Logo Opener designed by [_miko_](#) licensed through Envato Market

Music credits:

Get Girl and Drink

Written by Hannah Avison, Tammy Infusino

Written/Produced by David Dahlquist, Giancarlo Castillo, Mher Filian

Performed by Tammy Infusino

Courtesy of BMI/ASCAP

We'll Make It

Performed by Goldheart
Written by Caroline Sue Gohmert
100% Clearance through MusicBed

A Hawaiian Getaway

Performed by Mike Stidolph
Composed by Mike Stidolph (BMI)
Published by Alliance AudioSparx (BMI)
Courtesy of AudioSparx

On My Way

Performed by Solis
Written by Leonardo Solis, Kellie Marie Solis
100% Clearance through MusicBed

Insurance: Frankel & Associates

Cast Payroll: NPI Entertainment Payroll

Equipment: EVS, DBHE Productions, Sight and Sound Hawaii, Misplaced Planet, Production Junction, JR Lighting, Inc.

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