

## Word On Da Street Expo-nation By: Michelle Cuttino

When Black Literature Magazine published the “Word on Da Street Book Expo-se” article (<http://blackliteraturemagazine.net/blackliteraturemagazine/2012/09/21/word-on-da-street-book-expo-se/>), we added a disclaimer that Lisa [Tyrell Perry-Amos] had been contacted for a statement we had not received yet and promised an update if and when we did.

Well, that time has come and Lisa has been asked all the questions lingering in the minds of the authors involved in the controversy as well as everyone else in the industry.

Black Literature Magazine has the exclusive inside scoop direct from Lisa about what really went down at the Word on Da Street Book Expo. Here’s what she had to say.

**Michelle:** Did you sign some sort of contract, or was there any type of paperwork involved in having the expo at the Underground Mall?

**Lisa:** Yes, a temporary licensing agreement and I provided a certificate of insurance.

**Michelle:** What was the total cost (excluding out-of-pocket traveling expenses) for authors to be a part of the book fair? What was that fee to include?

**Lisa:** \$125.00 for a half table or \$250.00 for a whole table. All monies made at the table were the author’s money.

**Michelle:** What happened when you arrived at the Underground Mall? Why weren’t the authors allowed to set up?

**Lisa:** I arrived with Ronnie Dawson at 1:10 pm. The tables had been delivered that morning to the Underground (I have the signed proof of delivery). They said we were cancelled because they didn’t receive the paperwork, which I faxed the day before (I have the fax confirmation). I received an email from Mandy two days before with the paperwork, I signed and faxed back. Conveniently, they didn’t receive it. I also find it funny that that day I got a security officer invoice for \$220.00, because the “new general manager” was nervous about us. WHY? I had left a voice mail for Michelle on Saturday morning saying that we got everything for the security. I had to ask the authors to contribute to that. It was unexpected and we originally started with thirty-five authors and we ended up with twelve, I believe. Three authors that begged me to hold tables until they were getting here and would pay backed out. So, I didn’t have the money for

it myself. I paid out of pocket for flyers, radio advertising, newspaper advertising, and Xfinity cable (Comcast).

I also left a voice mail for Michelle on Saturday morning that we would be arriving on schedule, the fax was sent and we would pay the security office directly for that upon arrival and if there was a problem to call me. She never called. We get there and it was total chaos. The lady at the reception center had to call Michelle, took her an hour to call back, then Mandy, who knows I took care of everything. They sent security down to the fax and like I said... Hmm they never received it. So, here I have to go all the way back to the hotel, get my friend to go to her cousin's house around the way, email her everything and have her print it for me and bring it to me. I texted [Author] Mocha C. to send me the fax number and I would fax it and be on my way back down there. Mind you, Ronnie Dawson was sitting on the phone with them watching me do all this. He was here with me. Mocha C. said the Underground says I can't fax it, bring it. Okkkkkk.. By this time it is 3:55 pm. I no sooner get in the car and Jamey Phillips' husband calls me and says, "Lisa they said it's too late. It's been cancelled and all the authors are leaving," and I just started crying.

**Michelle:** Did you pay the required fee to have the Expo?

**Lisa:** Yes, all of them except as explained above.

**Michelle:** It was said that you asked authors to pay an additional twenty dollars for the Meet & Greet on Friday night? What was the twenty dollars for?

**Lisa:** Yes, in the past I have paid for the Meet & Greet out of pocket with food and all. I will never use Hush Lounge again. I should have stuck with what I'm used to, The Spot Bar & Grill. We always had a great time. The general manager who charged us has now been fired and refunds will be issued.

**Michelle:** Did you ask authors for thirty dollars apiece the day of the Expo to pay the two hundred twenty dollars required to rent the space for the Expo? Explain.

**Lisa:** See above.

**Michelle:** Have you issued refunds to any of the authors for the Expo? Will they be reimbursed for their losses?

**Lisa:** I can't. The authors filed disputes on Paypal. I cannot do anything with that account. They blocked it. I can't get income in, or send out, even look at my balance. Nothing.

**Michelle:** How do you feel about Michael McGrew's viral video calling the Word on Da Street expo a scam?

**Lisa:** I was told by my lawyer I can file a defamation of character lawsuit. Anyone that knows me knows I don't even smoke weed let alone do drugs, and crack is the last thing since I was beaten by a crackhead for two years. I'll take a hair follicle test. And I never watched the video. The real authors that know better called me and inboxed me and I made a promise not to watch it.

**Michelle:** If given the opportunity to speak with any of the authors involved, what would you say?

**Lisa:** I have apologized, cried, not eaten, not done anything and now I just have no words for them. They made sure they did what they did, so now I'm going to do what I have to do... And they will know.

**Michelle:** If there is anything else you would like to add, please do so now.

**Lisa:** I have spent three years helping authors for FREE. I have mentored, talked, answered my phones all times of day and night, have put money out for authors I did not have to. I have done events for the past three years all over and never had a problem until now. I do all this from the heart not for money, and real recognize real and game recognize game, and I'm not the one. So for anyone to think this was a scam, you're just wrong – straight wrong. I'm not the one. Anyone and everyone know the authors are my babies and family. I have never done anyone wrong. Like when [Author] Vytamin Voyce paid and couldn't come because of her job in March, I gave her a free table to this one. I put out money for tables for a few authors out of pocket for this event and got hurt. It's ok, because if anyone understands... I'm the truth and I come hard and correct.

Well, there you have it. Whatever your conclusion, let us know what is *your* Word on Da Street?