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SISTERS IN CRIME PUBLISHES DIVERSITY REPORT

The Organization for Women Crime Writers Sheds Light on Diversity in Publishing

New York, NY - August 8, 2016– [Sisters in Crime](#), the organization dedicated to supporting female crime writers, has made public the 2016 [Sisters in Crime Publishing Summit Report on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the Mystery Community](#), titled “[Report For Change](#).” This report highlights data compiled through a survey of 1,100 of its members which ascertains race, sexual and gender identity, and any disabilities. The report also identifies best practices the organization should adopt in order to stay at the forefront of this important movement, and suggests concrete changes to be made in the greater mystery community.

“We recognized that writers of color, LGBT writers, and writers with disabilities face additional obstacles to getting published and finding readers that had not been fully explored,” says Leslie Budewitz, Sisters in Crime President. “Our goal with this report is to provide data, experience, and recommendations that everyone in the crime fiction community---writers, publishers, agents, booksellers, librarians, and organizations---can use to deepen our understanding and expand opportunities.”

The report sets the data from the Sisters in Crime member survey against US census data, providing a dramatic visual of the diverse authors in the genre. While White, non-Hispanics make up 62% of the US population, they make up 93% of Sisters in Crime members, with the remaining 7% divided between African American (3%), Native American (1.5%), Asian (1.5%) and Hispanic (1%) authors.

“As difficult as it is for white authors, it's tougher for people of color,” says one member surveyed. “The mainstream publishing world is very white and privileged and disconnected from the reading audience. Editors have trouble imagining an audience that isn't like them.”

With the rise of e-books and self-publishing, many writers of color are bypassing the gatekeepers and releasing their stories on their own. While only 21% of members surveyed reported self-publishing their last book (27% through a Big Five house while 35% through a small, traditional press), 63% of writers of color self-published their most recent book.

“Put bluntly, if people of color choose self-publishing freely, that’s fine,” says author and journalist Steph Cha. “If they choose it after rejection... that’s a ghetto.”

Similar patterns were identified among LGBT authors. Less than 10% reported publishing through a Big 5 publisher for their last book and nearly 50% self-published.

As a 30-year-old organization that is dedicated to the ongoing advancement, recognition and professional development of women crime writers, Sisters in Crime has reaffirmed its commitment towards expanding diversity in their membership and the greater mystery community. In conjunction with the Report for Change, SinC also launched *Frankie's List*, a database of writers of color, curated by and named for their first African American president, Frankie Y Bailey. Additional initiatives include compiling a list of publishers and editors actively seeking diverse authors, advocating for diverse authors in bookstores and libraries, and actively recruiting members of all backgrounds.

A summary of this report will be presented at the [2016 Bouchercon World Mystery Convention](#) in New Orleans. The full report is available at <http://www.sistersincrime.org/ReportforChange>.