

Social Impact Authors: How & Why Author Davis Macdonald Is Helping To Change Our World



Edward Sylvan, CEO of Sycamore Entertainment Group [Follow](#)

Apr 12 · 8 min read



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I write page-turning mystery stories. Books that people read on the beach, on airplanes, in lines, in

bed long into the night, and well past their bedtimes. But the places, the issues which motivate the characters, their circumstances, and the pressures and stress to which the characters are subjected, are my opportunities to present information on key social issues and moral choices which face our 21st Century society. If you don't know about a social issue, you can't change it.

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AS *part of my series about “authors who are making an important social impact”, I had the pleasure of interviewing Davis Macdonald. He is a very reputable mystery novelist that aims to make a huge impact with his novels. In each of his novels, you can expect venturesome concepts intertwined with a significant social issue that impacts the 21st century. Macdonald is local to southern California and draws his inspiration from the people and places around him.*

He has an extended background as a Law Professor, Bar Association Chair, Investment Banker, and Lawyer. Now he is turning the page, and putting his attention on being an author. You can find his books in your local bookstores and on Amazon.

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Thank you so much for joining us in this interview series! Before we dive into the main focus of our interview, our readers would love to “get to know you” a bit better. Can you tell us a bit about your childhood backstory?

I'm a native Angeleno. I grew up in the San Gabriel Valley, went to Cal Poly Pomona, and then on to USC Law School where I graduated first in the class. As a lawyer, I naturally write for a living, so it was a natural progression to write novels.

When you were younger, was there a book that you read that inspired you to take action or change your life? Can you share a story about that?

I read *The Boxcar Children* when I was eight years old which brought home how poor some families were in this country, then and today. In my book, *Silicon Beach*, I set out to write a mystery novel that would shed light on the plight of the homeless: who they are, why they are, how they live, the varying degrees of homelessness (do you sleep in a camper, a car, in a tent, under a bridge, etc.), and why they lack the political power to affect change. The novel, in its conclusion, proposes a change that would give them a political voice.

Can you share the funniest or most interesting mistake that occurred to you in the course of your career? What lesson or takeaway did you learn from that?

Life is a collection of misadventures and mistakes. I think that's how we learn. The key is to keep your sense of humor and move on toward your goal. At USC Law, during my first year, I was one of the outsiders from Cal Poly competing against students from Harvard, Yale, and Stanford who had all come to be lawyers. People made fun of my shirt pocket loaded with colored pens and my funny ways of taking notes and highlighting. The second year, I came back in the fall as first in the class, and suddenly everybody had colored pens in their pocket.

Can you describe how you aim to make a significant social impact with your books?

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Can you share with us the most interesting story that you shared in one of your books?

They're all interesting, and many come from real-life events and circumstances I've experienced, or my clients have experienced, over forty years of representing on-shore and off-shore people.

Consider the large schooner where the husband and wife were tied together with an anchor on the bow and shoved overboard; the Las Vegas pimp who disappeared after the project he funded didn't work out, only to be found dead in the desert, untouched, but 30 miles from any road; the owners of a preschool who lost everything, incarcerated for five years and two trials, for alleged child abuse that never occurred.

Truth is truly stranger than fiction. I try to capture some of this madness from real life and bottle it in my mystery stories.

What was the "aha moment" or series of events that made you decide to bring your message to the greater world? Can you share a story about that?

I read an article in the Los Angeles Times. A woman interviewing a very successful writer of novels asked if he used an outline. The writer replied to the effect, "Oh no. I don't use outlines. I select a place I think is interesting, strong characters, some vague idea about what I want to write about, and then I just start writing. The characters whisper what they want to say, and I write it down. When the characters tell me they are done, then I stop writing, and my story is done."

Without sharing specific names, can you tell us a story about a particular individual who was impacted or helped by one of your books?

There are some stories, but unfortunately, they are private.

Are there three things the community/society/politicians can do to help you address the root of the problem you are trying to solve?

Each book deals with a separate problem.

Consider Silicon Beach, which shines a light on the homeless. If many people came together and contributed to a PAC (a Political Action Committee) in order to help it raise sufficient funds, it could make sizable contributions on a continuing basis across the county to elected representatives who pledged to fight for legislation to eliminate the homeless problem. And the homeless problem would disappear.

How do you define “Leadership”? Can you explain what you mean or give an example?

Leadership to me encompasses two very different skills. The ability to have a vision of where you want to go and the persuasive power to convince others, your family, your team, your company, your army, your country, to follow you toward that vision.

I admire the great military leaders who had these two qualities, such as Alexander The Great, George Washington, George Patton, and many others.

What are your “5 things I wish someone told me when I first started” and why? Please share a story or example for each.

- That you would rewrite a book several times before you were done. It’s a fact of life.
- That inspiration comes from lots of planning, lots of hard thought, and lots of hard work.
- That you won’t please everyone with your story.
- That success as a writer is 50% perseverance and 50% luck.
- In the end, your satisfaction as a writer has to come from writing for yourself. The mass market may take or leave your endeavor, but you must be comfortable with what you said, how you said it, and why.

Can you please give us your favorite “Life Lesson Quote”? Can you share how that was relevant to you in your life?

From Admiral Lord Nelson, when asked how he won the battle of Trafalgar against the French:

“You just keep going at them... you Keep Going At Them...!!... You never quit. You just keep going at them.”

Perseverance is certainly required to be a successful novelist.

Is there a person in the world, or in the US with whom you would like to have a private breakfast or lunch with, and why? He or she might just see this, especially if we tag them. :-)

Dr. Mark Goulston, one of the most creative minds in the world of psychoanalyst, human relationships, and communication. His book, ‘Just Listen’, lays out the critical skills essential for success in business and in life.

How can our readers further follow your work online?

First, remember my name. It’s “Davis” with an “s”, not “David” and “MACdonald”, like old Macdonald had a farm.

Search “Davis MacDonald — Author” on Google, to be taken to my website, or Amazon, to see what books are available in Paperback, on Audio Book, and on Kindle.

For more information on Davis Macdonald please visit <http://davismacdonald-author.com/>

This was very meaningful, thank you so much. We wish you only continued success on your great work!

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A bout *The Interviewer*: Growing up in Canada, Edward Sylvan was an unlikely candidate to make a mark on the high-powered film industry based in Hollywood. But as CEO of Sycamore Entertainment Group Inc, (SEGI) Sylvan is among a select group of less than ten Black executives who have founded, own and control a publicly traded company. Now, deeply involved in the movie business, he is providing opportunities for people of color.

In 2020, he was appointed president of the Monaco International Film Festival, and was encouraged to take the festival in a new digital direction.

Raised in Toronto, he attended York University where he studied Economics and Political Science, then went to work in finance on Bay Street, (the city's equivalent of Wall Street). After years of handling equities trading, film tax credits, options trading and mergers and acquisitions for the film, mining and technology industries, in 2008 he decided to reorient his career fully towards the entertainment business.

With the aim of helping Los Angeles filmmakers of color who were struggling to understand how to raise capital, Sylvan wanted to provide them with ways to finance their creative endeavors.

At Sycamore Entertainment he specializes in print and advertising financing, marketing, acquisition and worldwide distribution of quality feature-length motion pictures, and is concerned with acquiring, producing and promoting films about equality, diversity and other thought provoking subject matter which will also include nonviolent storytelling.

Also in 2020, Sylvan launched SEGI TV, a free OTT streaming network built on the pillars of equality, sustainability and community which is scheduled to reach 100 million U.S household televisions and 200 million mobile devices across Roku, Amazon Fire TV, Apple TV, Samsung Smart TV and others.

As Executive Producer he currently has several projects in production including The Trials of Eroy Brown, a story about the prison system and how it operated in Texas, based on the best-selling book, as well as a documentary called The Making of Roll Bounce, about the 2005 coming of age film which starred rapper Bow Wow and portrays roller skating culture in 1970's Chicago.

He sits on the Board of Directors of Uplay Canada, (United Public Leadership Academy for Youth), which prepares youth to be citizen leaders and provides opportunities for Canadian high school basketball players to advance to Division 1 schools as well as the NBA.

A former competitive go kart racer with Checkered Flag Racing Ltd, he also enjoys traveling to exotic locales. Sylvan resides in Vancouver and has two adult daughters.

Sylvan has been featured in Forbes, the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times and has been seen on Fox Business News, CBS and NBC. Sycamore Entertainment Group Inc is headquartered in Seattle, with offices in Los Angeles and Vancouver.

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