

CWIG Conference
Beyond the Book
21 September 2019



The conference finished with the session *I've Been Shamed, Get Me Out Of Here!* How to deal with bad publicity – firestorms, trolls, malicious reviews – and turn it around with panellists Rosi Crawley (Walker), Emma Draude (ED PR), Fritha Lindqvist (Fritha Lindqvist PR), Ruth Shearn (RMS Media) and chaired by Keren David (writer and Feature Editor of the *Jewish Chronicle*). A good Scattered Authors blog detailing the session was published by Keren here:

<https://awfullybigblogadventure.blogspot.com/2019/10/so-youve-been-shamed-by-keren-david.html>, but these are Fritha Lindqvist's key take-homes:

Get your story straight

Know your story (your book) but also know 'your story' (the origin and inspiration – why this is the story you had to tell).

If you are watertight in your intent and the execution of your narrative then you have an 'alibi' if you are called out on an aspect of your story.

Prevention rather than cure

Know your story and know if there are likely to be any aspects open for criticism or misinterpretation and seek advice from your agent, your editor, your publicist as to how you might address potential criticisms.

Have solid answers to defend your position or explain why you included a certain character or why you wanted to write a story about a time and place you have never experienced.

If a book is acquired by a publisher, there should be a 'story' behind why the narrative is being told by that particular author.

Write yourself a set of Key Messages about your book and a Q&A around its themes and characters (what is the most difficult question someone might ask you? What is the worst criticism someone might levy at your book? etc). Seek advice from others involved in your book's publication.

If you are writing about characters or scenarios different from your own experiences, do your research and consider working with a sensitivity reader – this must be at concept or very early draft stage.

Listen to what people say about your book. Be open to different viewpoints and consider working with groups that exist within or advocate for relevant communities to your title.

Read or listen to Jon Ronson's *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*

This title goes to the very heart of what it means to be shamed. An abridged version is freely available on BBC Sounds: www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07h3hhp.