



# D. Watkins

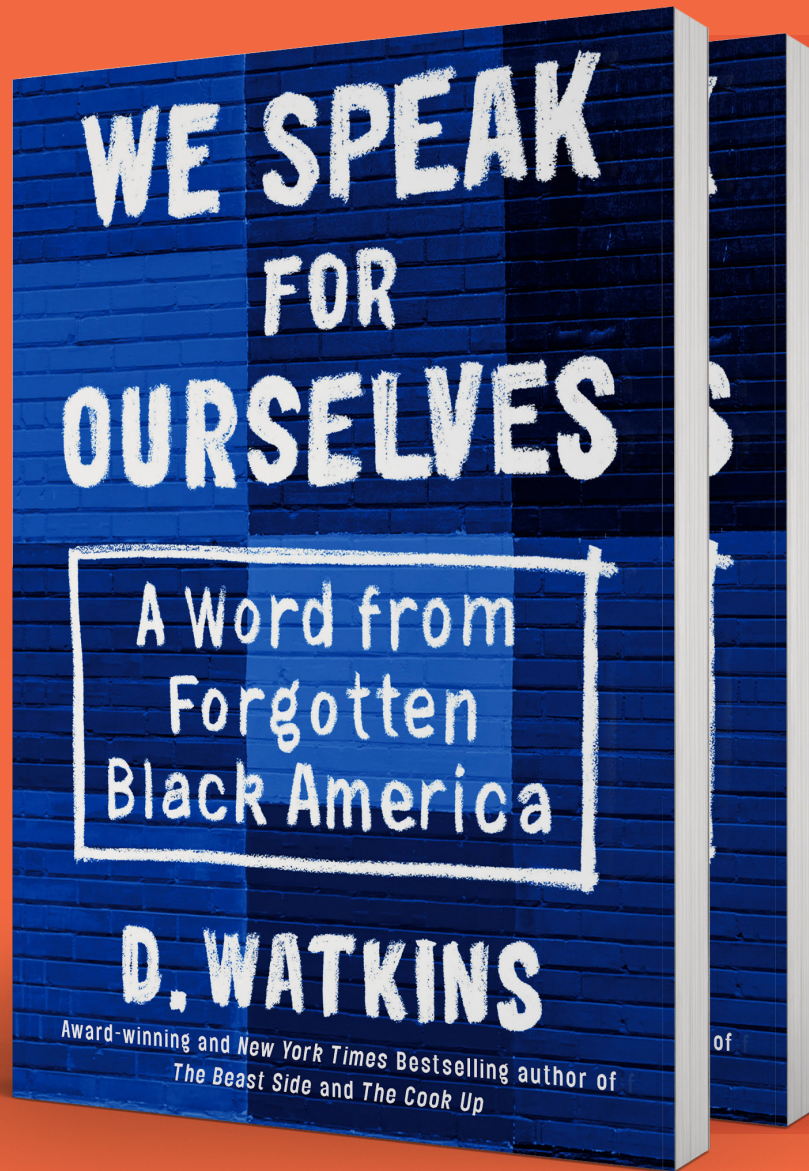
AUTHOR | SPEAKER | PROFESSOR  
SALON TALKS HOST

**D. Watkins** is Editor at Large for Salon. His work has been published in the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *Rolling Stone*, and other publications. He holds a Master's in Education from *Johns Hopkins University* and an MFA in Creative Writing from the *University of Baltimore*.

He is a college professor at the *University of Baltimore* and founder of the *BMORE Writers Project*— and has also been the recipient of numerous awards including *BMe* Genius Grant and Ford's Men of Courage. Watkins was also a finalist for the Hurston Wright Legacy Award and Books for A Better Life. He has lectured at countless universities, and events, around the world. Watkins has been featured as a guest and commentator on *NBC's Meet the Press*, *CNN's The Erin Burnett Show*, and *Democracy Now*, among other shows.

Watkins is from and lives in East Baltimore. He is the author of *We Speak For Ourselves: A Word from Forgotten Black America* and the New York Times bestsellers *The Beast Side: Living (and Dying) While Black in America* and *The Cook Up: A Crack Rock Memoir*.

April 23, 2019



From the row homes of Baltimore to the stoops of Brooklyn, with searing conviction and full compassion, two-time New York Times bestselling author D. Watkins lays bare the voices of the most vulnerable and allows their raw, intimate stories to uncover the systematic injustices threaded within our society. Remarkable in both its power and simplicity, *We Speak for Ourselves* makes readers listen, feel, and create a new course toward change during one of the most divisive political times our country has ever witnessed.

We see it almost every day we turn on the television, Black lives are often discussed from what D. Watkins, Editor-at-large for Salon and a winner of the BMe Genius Grant, calls a “drone-like” perspective. Those in low-income black communities—the hood—are opined and debated about, yet never truly heard. Watkins changes that in *We Speak for Ourselves*.

# WE SPEAK FOR OURSELVES

Honest and eye opening, *We Speak for Ourselves* begins by introducing readers to “Down Bottom,” the storied community of Baltimore that holds a mirror to the country’s poor Black neighborhoods. “Hoods” that the larger society seem to easily forget. Hoods that could just as easily be Chicago, Detroit, Oakland or Atlanta. Watkins walks readers through an in-depth analysis of inner-city hurdles with school systems, food deserts, poverty, drugs and housing by combining razor-sharp wit with hardcore facts. Next, he presents the “biggest gang in America,” the police force, and the brutality and illegal practices we must face and end, in order to rebuild. The journey is not complete until Watkins forces readers to look in the mirror themselves and ask if they are part of the problem or the solution.

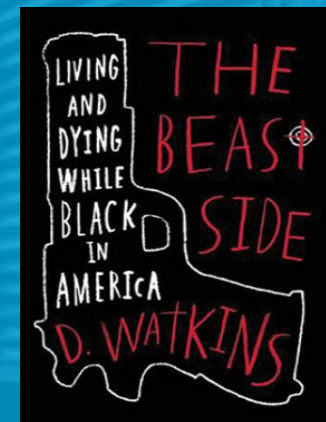
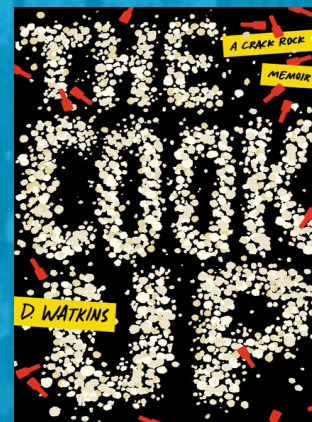
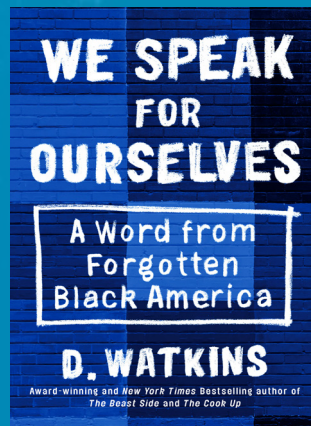
Whether we find D. in the gym shooting hoops at Hopkins University, sitting on a panel facing an audience donned with Make America Great Again caps, or joining the writhe of cries outpoured after the death of Freddie Gray. Watkins uses the spaces he embodies to tell a story we cannot look away from, because it is a story that belongs to us all. A story often forgotten.

Unapologetic, Watkins presents the unfiltered voices we must listen to if we truly desire to create change in every pocket of this country. He’d make a great addition speaking on:

- The plight of inner-city communities suffering from food deserts, illiteracy, under-funded schools, police brutality and more.
- The American tradition of criminal police forces and how they unravel the trust of the communities they are called to protect and serve.
- The problem with claiming to be “Woke” in today’s social justice climate and social media influenced activism.
- The power of proximity and the real meaning of allyship.
- Watkins offers an “Am I Making a Difference Checklist;” as well as, various ways to become involved by using a process called “skillsharing.”
- How Trump supporters and those fighting against his regime may find common ground to make America better – he wouldn’t say it’s ever been “great.”

Incisive, heartfelt and challenging, *We Speak for Ourselves* is an anthem for change that transcends income and political ideology, a treatise on aiming to solve the issues that plague Black America and the world at-large.

The  
New York  
Times  
Bestseller



“D. Watkins is uniquely equipped to communicate our political and social challenges of urban America, not only through the lens of academia but through empirical knowledge as well. He is the voice of the future seamlessly blending the wisdom of the streets and intellectual prowess in a way I have never experienced before.”

— Jada Pinkett Smith

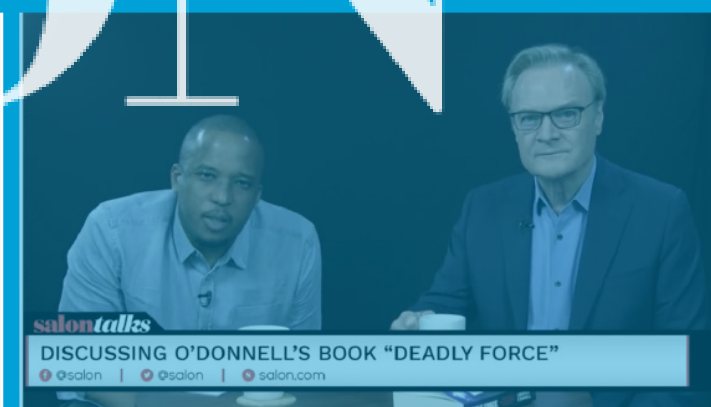
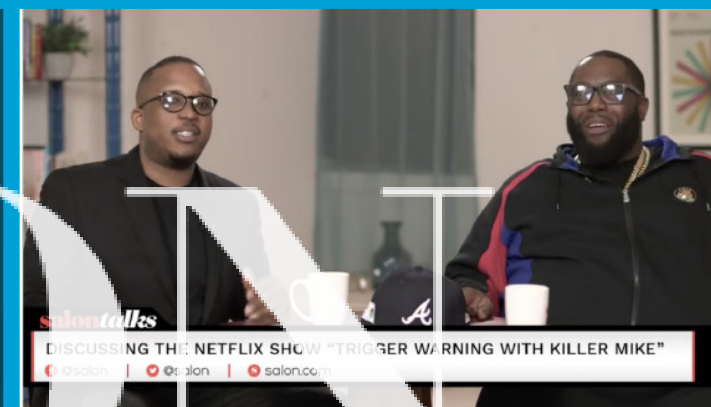
Writer



“*We Speak for Ourselves* is full of insight into the America that serves as grist for the American dream. Its pages are abundant with wisdom and wit; integrity and love, not to mention enough laughs for a stand-up comedy routine. Over and over again, I found myself saying ‘yes, yes, he’s right’ and ultimately finished feeling inspired to do better, to be more. D Watkins proves, once again, why he isn’t just a writer of the people but a people’s literary champ for the here, now, and tomorrow.

— MITCHELL S. JACKSON, author of *Survival Math: Notes on an All-American Family*





# Media

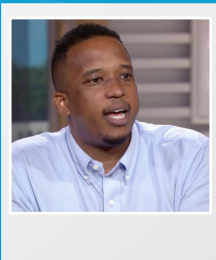
“Watkins’s belief [is] in the telling of black stories, in their ugliness and in their beauty.”

—*The New York Times*



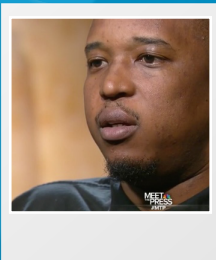
Don Lemon tours  
Baltimore with local writer  
CNN, DON LEMON

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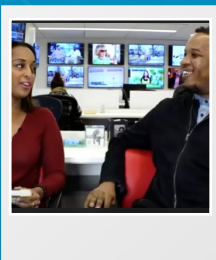
Growing Up Black in  
Baltimore’s “Beast Side”  
MSNBC MEET THE PRESS

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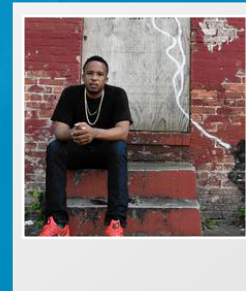
‘Baltimore Police Officers  
are out of Control’  
MSNBC MEET THE PRESS

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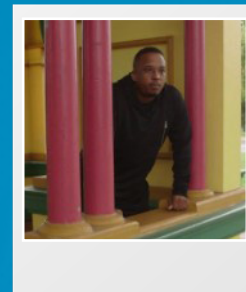
Author D. Watkins talks  
going from Baltimore drug  
dealer to professor and writer  
THE GRIO

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Bestselling Author D. Watkins  
Talks Trump, Satire and the  
Future of Salon  
PASTE WRITE UP

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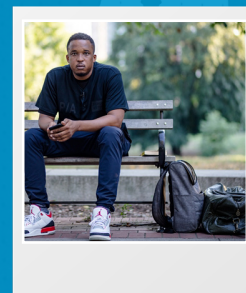


He escaped ‘the beast’  
of Baltimore  
CNN FEATURE

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The View  
From Baltimore  
THE ATLANTIC

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D. Watkins Tells it Like it Was  
in Memoir, ‘The Cook Up’  
NBC NEWS

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‘The Cook Up: A Crack Rock  
Memoir,’ by D. Watkins  
NEW YORK TIMES

[▶ READ FULL ARTICLE](#)



“In a time of blunt-bladed posturing and hyperbolized impact, *We Speak For Ourselves*, is a sharp gash into the psyche of America. Written as a relentless slice of his own life, Watkins avoids pretense as he puts language to his jagged experiences, not to encourage voyeurism, but to instead push people to grapple and wrestle with the real lives so many talking heads attempt to muzzle, then fictionalize. Watkins has come to remind us, everyone deserves the opportunity to speak for themselves. Everyone.”

— JASON REYNOLDS, New York Times bestselling author & National Book Award finalist, *Long Way Down*

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“*We Speak For Ourselves* is an ode to those Black people who understand that the first place so many of us honed our understandings of knotty U.S. racial politics was in an American city, or rural town, fashioned as a ‘hood’ in the public imagination. Watkins writes with a type of profound love for the Black forgotten that will compel all who read his timely words to never forget the Black people and places so many cultural critics and thought leaders disremember with ease.”

— DARNELL L MOORE,  
author of *No Ashes in the Fire: Coming of Age Black & Free in America*

D. Watkins