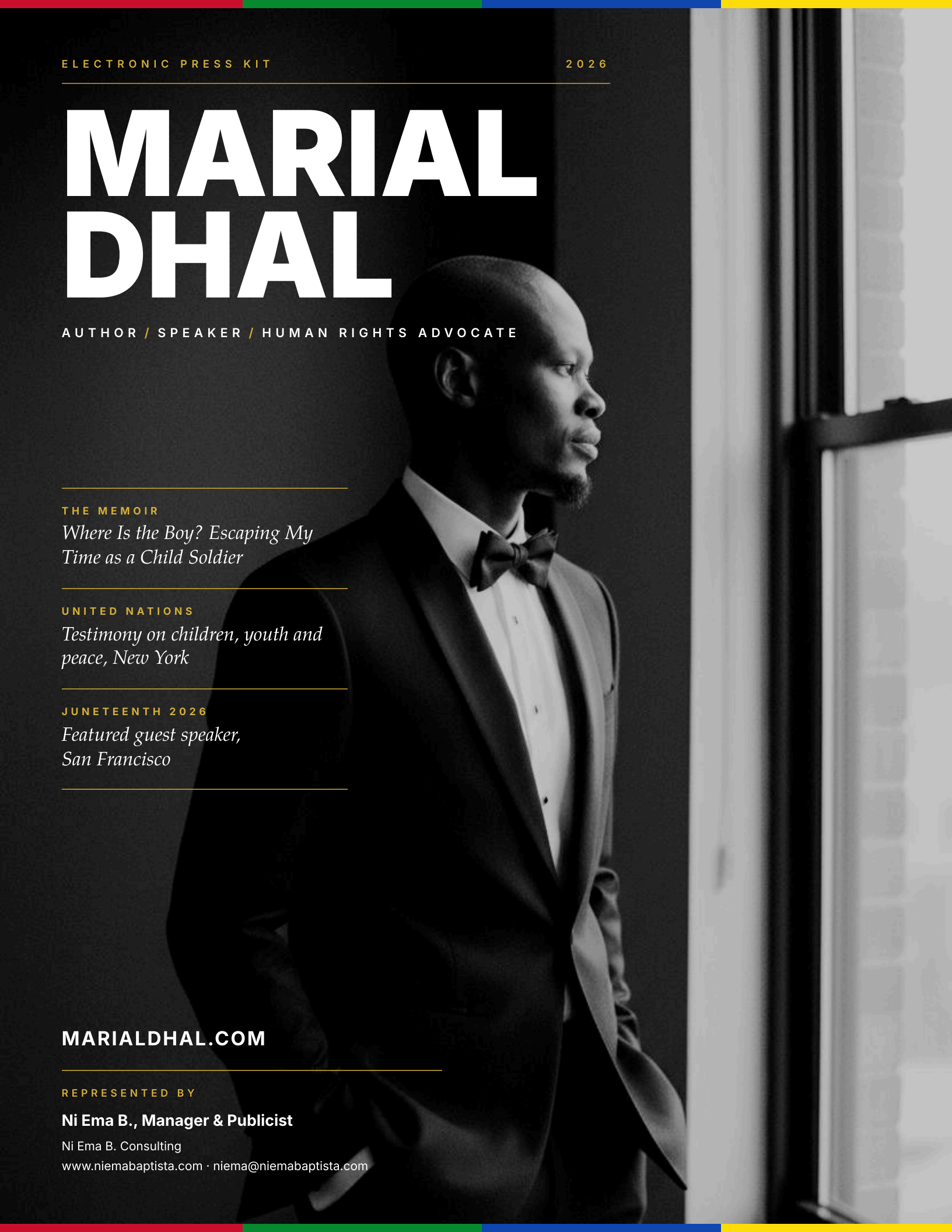
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MARIAL DHAL

AUTHOR / SPEAKER / HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCATE



THE MEMOIR

Where Is the Boy? Escaping My Time as a Child Soldier

UNITED NATIONS

Testimony on children, youth and peace, New York

JUNETEENTH 2026

Featured guest speaker, San Francisco

MARIALDHAL.COM

REPRESENTED BY

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01 ABOUT

FROM A VILLAGE SCHOOL TO A DEGREE IN DIPLOMACY

Marial Dhal grew up wanting an education, and as a boy he had just begun to receive one at a school newly established in his village. One December day, while he was playing in a field with friends, rebel soldiers arrived. Without his family's knowledge or consent, he and other boys were taken from their homes and forced to train as soldiers in the Sudanese civil war.

His memoir recounts that training and the attempts he made, again and again, to get away. His escape finally carried him across international borders into a refugee camp in Kenya, where little about his future was certain.

In the camp he discovered basketball. He became a promising player, and the game earned him an athletic scholarship to high school. The school he had lost in his village had found him again by another route.

He went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Canisius University in Buffalo, New York, and a Master of Diplomacy with a concentration in conflict management from Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont. Having lived through a civil war as a child, he chose to study how conflict is understood and managed.

In 2024 he published *Where Is the Boy? Escaping My Time as a Child Soldier*. Today he speaks as an author and human rights advocate for education and the protection of children affected by war. In June 2025 he shared his testimony at a United Nations panel in New York on the role of children and youth in building peace.

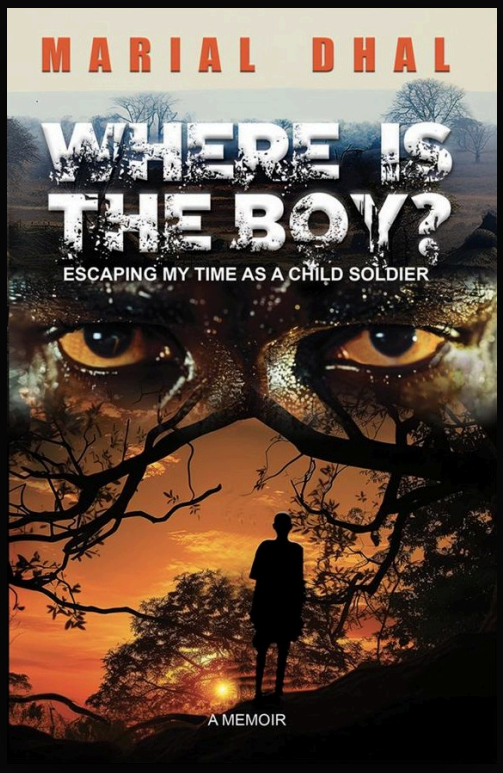
SHORT BIO FOR PROGRAMS

Marial Dhal is a South Sudanese author, speaker and human rights advocate from the Dinka people. His memoir, *Where Is the Boy? Escaping My Time as a Child Soldier* (2024), recounts his forced recruitment into the Sudanese civil war as a boy, his escape to a refugee camp in Kenya, and the basketball scholarship that led him back to school. He holds a B.A. in International Relations from Canisius University and a Master of Diplomacy from Norwich University.



HERITAGE	South Sudanese, Dinka
WORK	Author, speaker, human rights advocate
HEIGHT	7′2″
BOOK	*Where Is the Boy?* (2024)
EDUCATION	M. Diplomacy, Norwich University B.A., Canisius University
SPEAKS ON	Education, displacement, children in conflict, rebuilding
INSTAGRAM	@marialdhal34

FULL BIO ONLINE



ORIGINAL COVER

WHERE IS THE BOY?

Escaping My Time as a Child Soldier

On a December day, a boy playing with his friends in a field was singled out by rebel soldiers and taken from his family. This is his account of what came after: the training, his repeated attempts to escape, and the escape that carried him across borders to a refugee camp in Kenya. There he found basketball, and basketball led him back to school.

> *"Marial Dhal's story of perseverance and survival is a testament to the human spirit and the power of family. His strong personality and sense of self helped him overcome the most difficult challenges. This memoir is heartwarming."*
>
> DAVID DEVEREUX, PROFESSOR, CANISIUS UNIVERSITY

EDITIONS

PAPERBACK	Barnes & Noble Press · September 30, 2024 · 158 pages · ISBN 9798331487713
KINDLE	August 27, 2024 · ASIN B0DFHHY76B
ALSO	Hardcover and paperback on Amazon
EDITORS	Katie Carter and Rachael Benedict

WHERE TO BUY

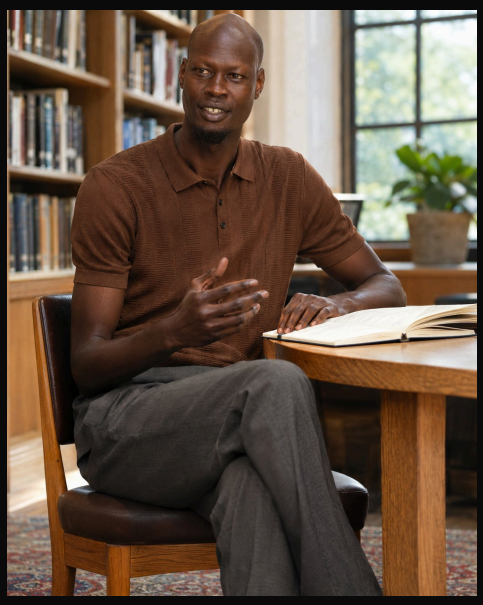
RETAIL	Barnes & Noble · Amazon
SIGNED	Request a signed copy from Marial
BULK	Schools, libraries, book clubs and event audiences
ONLINE	marialdhal.com/the-book

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03 SPEAKING

LIVED IT. STUDIED IT. SPEAKS TO IT.

Marial brings a first-hand account of war and displacement together with training in international relations and conflict management, for audiences who want to understand what conflict takes from a childhood and what an education can rebuild.



TOPICS

01

Education as the way forward

A village school, a scholarship after the camp, and why learning stayed at the center of his life.

02

Displacement and rebuilding

Leaving home by force, life in a refugee camp in Kenya, and what it takes to start over.

03

What a game made possible

How basketball, found in a refugee camp, opened the way to high school and college.

04

Telling a hard story

Why he wrote the memoir, and what it means to share a personal history in public.

FORMATS

Keynote, moderated conversation, author reading and Q&A, panel. In person or virtual.

AUDIENCES

Schools and universities, libraries and book programs, cultural institutions and heritage celebrations, community and nonprofit organizations.

BOOKS FOR ATTENDEES

Can be arranged with an engagement through a bulk order inquiry.

BOOK MARIAL

MARIALDHAL.COM/SPEAKING

FEATURED GUEST SPEAKER, SAN FRANCISCO JUNETEENTH

In June 2026 Marial was a featured guest speaker at the San Francisco Juneteenth Parade & Celebration, speaking at the Soul & Sound wrap party at Embarcadero Plaza. The year's theme was *Freedom Then. Freedom Now.*



WATCH: SL FILM, JUNETEENTH PARADE 2026 · MARIAL AT 0:47



EVENT	2026 San Francisco Juneteenth Parade & Celebration
DATE	June 20, 2026
ROLE	Featured guest speaker, Soul & Sound wrap party
THEME	Freedom Then. Freedom Now.
VIDEO	SL Film, official parade recap

WATCH THE VIDEO | ANNOUNCEMENT | FREEDOM THEN AND NOW

05 ON RECORD

UNITED NATIONS PANEL, NEW YORK

On June 20, 2025, Marial shared his testimony at *Creativity as a Catalyst for Peace: The Role of Children and Youth*, a United Nations panel at The Africa Center in New York. Hosted in partnership with UNESCO, Students Rebuild and the Creative Visions Foundation, the event brought together diplomats, peacebuilders, artists, educators and youth advocates.

> *"When war ends, the violence doesn't. Guns remain. Trauma lingers. And if youth are left behind, they become the next generation of conflict. But when we educate them, when we teach them their rights and their worth, we give them a future."*
>
> MARIAL DHAL, UNITED NATIONS PANEL, 2025

EVENT	Creativity as a Catalyst for Peace: The Role of Children and Youth
DATE	June 20, 2025
VENUE	The Africa Center, New York
PARTNERS	UNESCO, Students Rebuild, Creative Visions Foundation
ROLE	Shared his testimony

SEE THE POST

ALSO ON RECORD



PODCAST · EPISODE 29 · NOVEMBER 26, 2025

The BlissFULL Life with Regina Lawless

Watch the full episode · Listen

AUTHOR EVENT · NOVEMBER 8

Echoes of Freedom

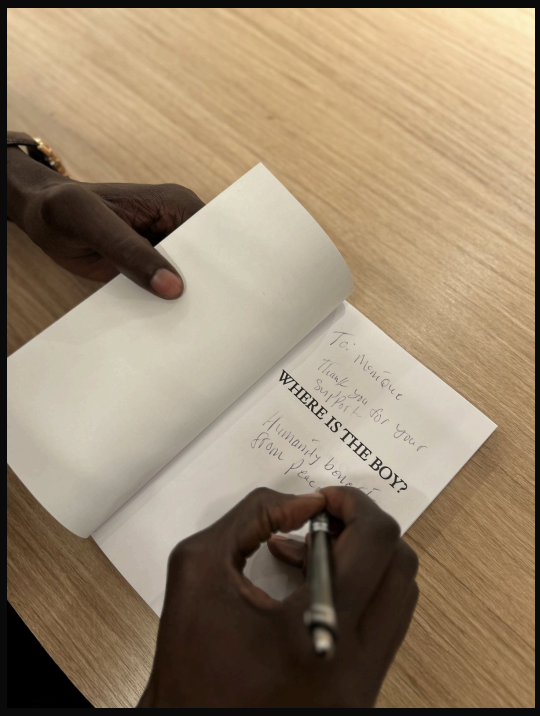
An evening with the author: a reading from *Where Is the Boy?* and discussion.

Watch the reading



"You have to find peace in yourself to be able to give peace to other people."

MARIAL DHAL



MARIAL SIGNING A COPY OF *WHERE IS THE BOY?*

WATCH AND LISTEN

San Francisco Juneteenth 2026 (SL Film), Marial at 0:47	WATCH
"What does freedom then and freedom now mean to you?"	WATCH
Author reading and conversation	WATCH
United Nations panel, New York, 2025	VIEW
The BlissFULL Life with Regina Lawless, Ep. 29	WATCH
More photos and video	MARIALDHAL.COM/MEDIA

FIND MARIAL ONLINE

Website	MARIALDHAL.COM
Biography	MARIALDHAL.COM/BIO
Online press kit	MARIALDHAL.COM/EPK
Press release	MARIALDHAL.COM/PRESS
Instagram	@MARIALDHAL34

South Sudanese author and human rights advocate Marial Dhal traces a stolen childhood, and the education that rebuilt his life, in *Where Is the Boy?*

The memoir follows Dhal from a newly opened village school, through forced recruitment in the Sudanese civil war, to a refugee camp in Kenya and the basketball scholarship that led him back to the classroom.

Marial Dhal's memoir, *Where Is the Boy? Escaping My Time as a Child Soldier*, begins on a sunny day in December, when a boy playing with his friends in a field, shooting bows and arrows, is singled out by rebel soldiers and taken from his home without his family's knowledge or consent. Along with other young boys, he is forced to train as a soldier in the Sudanese civil war.

Dhal had just begun attending a newly established school in his village, and the book follows his determination to return to an education. It recounts his training, his repeated attempts to escape the army, and the escape that finally carried him across international borders into a refugee camp in Kenya. There he discovered basketball. The game earned him an athletic scholarship to high school, and he went on to graduate from college.

Dhal, who is South Sudanese and from the Dinka people, earned a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations from Canisius University in Buffalo, New York, and a Master of Diplomacy with a concentration in conflict management from Norwich University in Northfield, Vermont.

Since the book's release, Dhal has brought its story to audiences as a speaker and advocate for education and the protection of children affected by war. In June 2025 he shared his testimony at *Creativity as a Catalyst for Peace: The Role of Children and Youth*, a United Nations panel at The Africa Center in New York held in partnership with UNESCO, Students Rebuild and the Creative Visions Foundation. In June 2026 he was a featured guest speaker at the San Francisco Juneteenth Parade & Celebration, speaking at the Soul & Sound wrap party under the theme "Freedom Then. Freedom Now." He discussed his life and the memoir with Regina Lawless on episode 29 of The BlissFULL Life, and has read from the book at author events, including Echoes of Freedom, an evening with the author.

His new website, marialdhal.com, brings together his biography, the book, speaking information and press materials, with booking and book-order inquiries in one place.

BOOK DETAILS

Where Is the Boy? Escaping My Time as a Child Soldier by Marial Dhal. Edited by Katie Carter and Rachael Benedict. Paperback, Barnes & Noble Press, ISBN 9798331487713. Also available in Kindle, hardcover and paperback on Amazon. Available at Barnes & Noble and Amazon. Signed and bulk copies: order directly.

ABOUT MARIAL DHAL

Marial Dhal is a South Sudanese author, speaker and human rights advocate from the Dinka people. His memoir recounts his forced recruitment into the Sudanese civil war as a boy, his escape to a refugee camp in Kenya, and the basketball scholarship that led him back to school. Learn more at marialdhal.com and on Instagram at @marialdhal34.

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# # #

07 PHOTOGRAPHY

APPROVED IMAGES

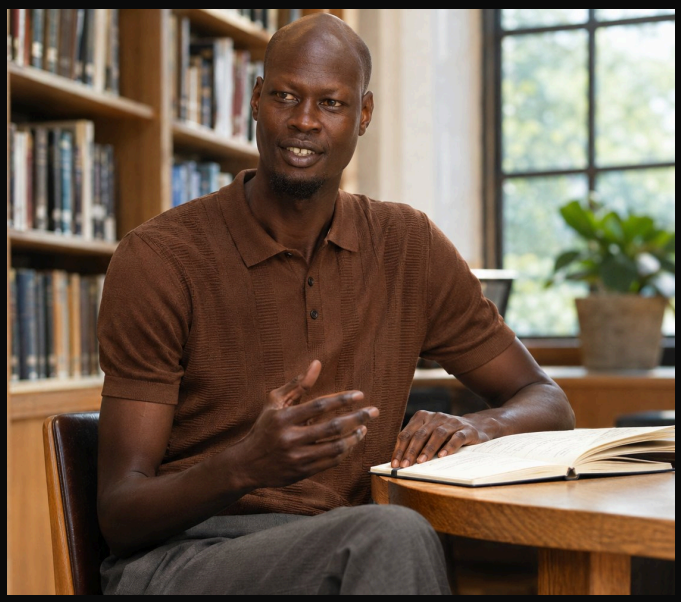
Approved for promotion and press. Credit: Courtesy of Marial Dhal. Select any image or link for the full-size file.



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08 BOOKING & PRESS

BRING MARIAL DHAL TO YOUR AUDIENCE

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