

THE WRITE STUFF

JOE BLACK IS EDITING THE THOUGHTS ON CONVICTS WITH HIS BOOK, *STREET TEAM*



In 1993, at the age of 24, Bronx native Joe "Black" Reddick blew trial, was eventually convicted of conspiracy to distribute crack and sentenced to 19 years in federal prison. "I made some bad decisions as a kid and [being locked up] is one of the results," Black says.

Known in the prison system for his basketball skills, Joe Black has spent the last few years perfecting his handle on pens rather than Spaldings, writing novels that detail the street life he left behind. "I want to be known as a person who did more than sell drugs and play ball," says Black, who expects to be released from prison by 2010.

After writing stories to read to his "non-book-reading celly" Joe got some help from published prison author Michael Santos and went on to form Ill Street Publishing, through which he released *Street Team*, a hard-hitting, 220-page tome. "The book is the closest you can come to being in the game without being indicted," Black says. "It's about four cats who each come from some form of a broken home with no siblings, grew up in the same neighborhood and only had each other. It's real. Parents who pay little attention to their kids will lose them to the streets."

Street Team has created a buzz inside as well as on the streets, and Black used it to secure a publishing deal with Hampstead Publishing, run by street magazine *Don Diva's* own Susan Hampstead, a new player in the lucrative "street lit" genre. "The plan now is that all of Joe's books will be done under Hampstead Publishing," Hampstead confirms.

By the time Black hits the bricks, he should be ready for a national book tour, having triumphantly left the drug game and the rough-and-tumble world of prison-basketball behind. "I'm an author now," Black states proudly. "Writing has become a major part not only of my bid, but of my life." —SETH M. FERRANTI