

PSU alum returns to motivate aspiring authors

By Hannah Rishel
COLLEGIAN STAFF WRITER

Some Penn State students dream about writing and publishing a book. One alumnus has made it his reality.

Mister Mann Frisby will return to Penn State, his alma mater, to hold a workshop called "How to Get Started Writing Your Book and What to do When You're Finished" at 1 p.m. Saturday at the Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel. There is a \$30 fee for students and \$50 fee for the general public at the door.

The workshop is intended to be an inspiration for prospective writers.

"It's about how to get started. Some people struggle with the first page. Writing is intimidating, whether it's fiction or non-fiction," Frisby said.

"I want to get people fired up to write their story because every-

body has a story that needs to be told."

Ashley Stryker (sophomore-English) is one such aspiring writer.

"I came to Penn State because of the English program," Stryker said.

"It's inspirational that the program has produced results."

Frisby graduated from Penn State in 1997 with a degree in journalism from the College of Communications.

Two weeks after graduation he began working at The Philadelphia Daily News after doing an internship with the paper.

In 2000, he left his job as a reporter to become a novelist. He self-published his first novel, "Blinking Red Light," in 2004, mostly out of the trunk of his car and through local bookstores.

"It's a lot of work, but it's worth it," Frisby said. "I wasn't scared, but there was anxiety. It's a lot of

work, a lot of hustle."

He compared the book industry to the current music industry.

These days musicians can put their music on iTunes themselves, without being signed to a major record label.

Frisby says the same is true for the book industry.

A two-book deal from Penguin Books publishing company followed his first publication, which gave birth to his second novel, "Wifebeater," and a motivational book for teenagers, "Holla Back...But Listen First: A Life Guide for Young Black Men."

"He wrote the book to inspire black males to be more positive in their lives," said Joseph Seldon, assistant dean and lecturer for the Office of Multicultural Affairs in the College of Communications. "He talked to celebrities, as well as the common man to compile the book. It's a real nice read."

Seldon, who advised Frisby while

he was a Penn State student, said Frisby's success as a writer is a complete surprise.

"There were times when he wasn't always focused as a student," he said.

"I think he was having too much fun at Penn State. But he was always a good writer. Just from his papers and from brief articles for newsletters, you could tell he had a gift of writing."

Frisby worked at The Daily Collegian for about a month during his college career. He has one clip — a story about business entertainment.

Frisby said he's incredibly excited to come back to Happy Valley, listing a stop at the Berkey Creamery and getting a hoagie from McLanahan's as things he wants to do before he leaves town.

"It's so different, so much bigger," he said.

"I remember when the bus station used to be the far end of

If you go

What: "How to Get Started Writing Your Book and What to do When You're Finished" with Mister Mann Frisby

When: 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 11

Where: The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel, Room 104

Details: 30 for students, \$50 for the general public

campus, now there's classroom buildings right next to it."

Frisby's next book, set to be released next year, is his memoir, which will include stories from his days in Happy Valley. He will return to Penn State as a guest speaker for Black History Month next semester.

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