



**AUTHOR**  
REVOLUTION

PODCAST  
TRANSCRIPT

## EPISODE 44

# *List-Aiming with a Rapid Release Series*

SEE THE SHOW NOTES AT: [AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/44](http://AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/44)

This episode of the author revolution podcast is sponsored by the Windhaven Witches. Nestled in the woods of Windhaven Massachusetts, Blackwood Manor waits to unleash a dark and deadly legacy. When Autumn Blackwood shows up at Windhaven Academy she hopes to find out what dormant power she possesses in order to have been accepted to the elite supernatural school. Instead, an accident brings her face to face with a deadly legacy that could either save or doom them all. Fans of Kelly Armstrong, Joe Hill, and Jennifer Armentrout will love this supernatural ghost series. Head over to your favorite bookstore site now to preorder the hunting first book, Secret Legacy, available September 15 2020.

Welcome back to another episode of the Author Revolution Podcast. I'm Carissa Andrews, international bestselling author and CEO of Author Revolution - the author's source for all things rapid releasing.

Come on guys, I know you. You want to be a bestselling author, right? You dream about having the letters of USAT or NYT beside your name. I get it, I do, too. That's why I decided this year I was going to make my first list-aim run with the Windhaven Witches. It just made sense. The story of Secret Legacy was based off of my first-ever manuscript that I wrote when I was just fourteen years old. Plus, it also marks the 10-year anniversary since I started writing as a profession. Holy cow... 10 years. Crazy!



**AUTHOR**  
REVOLUTION

**EPISODE 44: LIST-AIMING WITH A RAPID RELEASE  
SERIES**

[WWW.AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/44](http://WWW.AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/44)

Funnily enough, I didn't realize that being a NYT bestselling author was even a dream of mine until I got still and honest with myself. When I first started writing, it was all for the love of the story. In many ways, it still really is. I don't care about the notoriety of the letters, I'm just an over-achiever who likes to set lofty goals and make them happen. And trust me, this is a lofty goal.

Until a couple of years ago, I really didn't have any idea how I was going to make something like this happen. I mean, how do you go about trying to hit a bestseller list anyway? Are there rules? What are they? How do you get people to notice your book when you're competing against the top dogs who are in the traditionally published space? I didn't have those answers and I certainly didn't, as it turned out, have the funds to even make such an attempt.

So first off, let me tell you, hitting a list – it doesn't matter if it's the USAT or NYT – takes money. Lots and lots of money. It's no wonder the lists are full of traditionally published books, to be honest. Before *Secret Legacy*, the most I've spent on a book launch is \$250. We'll get into the numbers in a little bit, but I can tell you, I've spent a helluva lot more than that on *Secret Legacy*. A helluva lot.

Plus, it's taken me the better part of a year to map everything out, from the planning and writing of the series – to the execution of all the marketing. And I still don't know if I'll make the list yet. But of course, as soon as I know for sure – you'll be the next to find out. The week's results should be posted on September 24th and I'll share them with you in the following week's podcast on September 30th.

Before I get started on my process and what I've done to list-aim, let's talk really quick about the differences between the bestseller lists and the requirements it takes to hit the lists.



USAT – This list is a lot easier to hit in many ways. First of all, there are 150 slots – making it a lot easier to get placed. The typical rule of thumb is that you need to sell 5000 copies on Amazon and at least 500 copies on another platform – such as Barnes & Noble or Apple. This means, your book has to be wide in order to even be considered for a bestseller list. So, keep that in mind. Now, there are other authors who have gotten lucky, hitting the USAT with as little as 150 sold on another platform and as little as 3500 books on Amazon. It all comes down to the other titles that are releasing the same week as you and what their sales are. For some authors, it might take 7000 copies on Amazon and 750 on another platform. For USAT, it's all based on sales and ranks. You sell enough books, you make the list. As you can see, it still takes time, effort, and money – all for the easier list. Last year, a group of 11 of us aimed for the list with a box set and we still missed our mark.

NYT – The New York Times is a completely different animal in comparison to the USAT or Wall Street Journal. While they do take your sales into account, they also curate their list. What does that mean? It means, even if you sell enough books to technically qualify, if the curators don't think your book will resonate with their readers, your book won't get placed on the list. Plus, they only have 15 slots each week, compared to the 150 of the USAT. So, as you can imagine, you're going to want to move a LOT of books in order to get the attention of the NYT – and make sure that your book is visible in plenty of other locations that the editors and curators frequent, so they get familiar with your book in passing.

Okay, so with all of this in mind, what has the journey looked like so far for me?

Now, to be clear, I have taken advice from people online, like Melissa Storm and others, but the majority of the plan I put in place is a hybrid of what we did last year in our list-run attempt with the box set *Playing with Fire* and then my own concoction.



I looked at the list I'm aiming for – NYT and put some serious thought into what I believed would help me hit that specific list.

That started with covers. Originally, my covers were very genre specific. They fit the YA Academy scene, but when I compared it to the look and feel of what would be on the NYT Bestseller list, it didn't come up to snuff. So, if you were following me about this time last year, you may have seen the academy version of the cover. It was up for Secret Legacy for about a month before I revamped it to go with the whole series. The covers for the Windhaven Witches are typographically heavy – using the title of the book to do most of the heavy lifting. There's a single element on the cover that coincides the vibe/theme of the book and then each has the same dark, gothic looking background that's reminiscent to the wallpaper I saw in the dream when I was younger.

Next up, I used a spreadsheet to help me keep track of promo sites I wanted to engage with during launch week. Let me just tell you guys, there are A LOT of promo sites out there. I set up days starting with the day before launch, September 14th, all the way through to the 20th – my final push day. Ideally, the plan is to have a building momentum as we get closer and closer to the end of the week. However, there were a lot of heavy hitters that came out wanting to promote the book on day of launch – most notably, BookBub and E-Reader News Today. So, the plan with those days is to lie low with the online ads (like Amazon, BookBub and Facebook) and let those do the majority of the work on launch day. Then, as the promo stacking either dwindles down or doesn't have as much power, I turn on ads to blast up the views and get people heading over to the books.

Speaking of ads. I have been running Facebook Ads since the end of February for this series and Amazon ads since around December. When I started tracking the daily preorder numbers, it was the beginning of March.

So, after about a week of Facebook ads and a couple of months of Amazon ads at a low daily budget – I was at 232 preorders on Amazon, 11 on Apple, and 6 on BN. It wasn't stellar, but I knew I had a lot planned for launch week, so there was at least 6 months to keep pushing. Now, as of the time of this recording, I've been testing Amazon ads, Facebook Ads, and BookBub ads – all at low budgets, to see what authors and targets work best for this series and today I have 1200 preorders on Amazon, almost 100 on Apple, and just shy of 50 on BN. While those numbers might seem great to some people, they aren't as high as I would have liked to feel secure going in. But I also know that the majority of my budget was put into the launch week explosion. So, I need to cross fingers and toes and hope it does what it's meant to do.

Behind the scenes, Jenny and I have been working incredibly hard at getting some heavy hitters to newsletter swap with us as well. As of today, we have 60+ newsletter swaps going on the week of launch, with another 40 or so going out the week before and the week after.

We also have tons of launch week goodies planned. There's a scavenger hunt, puzzles, KingSumo giveaway with a Kindle Fire and signed copies of all of my backlist books, plus Jenny and I have been doing graveyard chats on my Facebook Page since October of last year.

In the midst of all of that, I started this podcast and started Rapid Release Roadmap's course. The beta test of the first few modules came out earlier this year, but the rest of the course itself is on hold until after the mega-launch because the workload has gotten pretty intense.

Now, another crazy thing I did was sign up for the International Book Publisher's Association or IBPA. What this allowed me to do is get Secret Legacy out on NetGalley, which has been an eye-opening experience. While I still think this series ROCKS and people who love Kelley Armstrong, Deborah Harkness, and others are going to love it...

the book is catching the eye of more than just those fans. Which is a double-edged sword. People who don't read a lot of YA/NA paranormal fiction aren't too sure about the insta-love and the younger vibe. So there's mixed reviews right now out on Goodreads because of it. I'm hoping once my ARC readers and the fans of this genre come out, things will shift back the other direction. But again, only time will tell with that.

In addition to NetGalley, I have an ARC team who I communicate with through my newsletter, as well as having it listed out on StoryOrigin.

Now, back to IBPA - I have also been able to sign up for media ARC requests - where IBPA communicates on my behalf to their media contact list, asking them if they would like a review copy. The email just went out yesterday afternoon and I've already had six such requests.

I've also worked with IBPA to hop into opportunities with Publisher's Weekly. I submitted *Secret Legacy* to be considered for the cover of their August 31st edition that highlights the "Most Anticipated Books of Fall." While only 14 of the 50 titles were chosen to be on the cover, sadly, *Secret Legacy* wasn't one of them. However, it will be published on the inside of the magazine, which is really cool. At the same time, I opted to put *Secret Legacy* in to a special Apple promotion with basically the same title - most anticipated books of fall - and it was also accepted into that. So, from September 1 to November 30th, it will be featured there. This, however, means I might have to rethink my idea to put *Secret Legacy* all in to KU right after launch week. If sales are still going well on iBooks at that time, I'll leave *Secret Legacy* wide until December.

As of this week, the first of my blog tours has also begun. I'm using SilverDagger Tours and Xpresso Tours to highlight the launch. Silver Dagger is the one that started on Monday 8/24 and I'm excited to use them to start building buzz. Then, on September 7th, Xpresso Tours will launch their tour.



Both tours go until 9/20, which is the last day of my list-aim week. For both tour camps, there were book blurbs that had to be written, excerpts, interviews, and guest posts to be created. They can be a lot of work, especially when you're coming down to the wire. Thankfully, I had a lot of bloggers who also opted to leave reviews. So, to them, I am eternally grateful.

Okay, so far, we've talked a lot about the marketing going on behind the scenes. What about the writing? The original first draft of *Secret Legacy* was done when I was fourteen. Weird, I know. I had a crazy dream and I ended up needing to write it down. Then, I decided I wanted to (eh-hem) resurrect it. The first version was going to be my take on reverse harem, but as it turns out, I suck at RH. So, I redid the book again, spun it with the series, and now, here we are.

The new version of *Secret Legacy* was wrapped up in February of this year. I moved on to *Soul Legacy*, which was finished in May. *Haunted Legacy* was written from June to the first part of August, and I'm 1/3 of the way done with *Cursed Legacy* right now. It's scheduled to be done right before *Secret Legacy's* launch, but I technically have until October - which is when it goes to the editor for final edits.

Yes, all of these books have a professional editor. Suzanne is incredible and she's even the editor Jennifer Armentrout has used. So, wicked! I've been using her since I wrote *Awakening* and I couldn't be more thrilled with her work.

One of the fun things we've done this year with *Secret Legacy* is that we've created a live-action trailer for it. My husband got the idea of doing something bigger for it and he's always wanted to take a stab at filming and directing. He took the book, wrote a small script, and created the storyboard/scenes/set. (Yes, he built most of the set for it!)





The entire process has been an experience, particularly thanks to the pandemic, but one that I will have such fond memories of for the rest of my life. We gathered up some of the most amazing young people we know, asked them if they'd join us in this crazy experiment, and we found that we surrounded by some incredible talent. From actors to makeup artists, we really have it all. It's safe to say, you'll likely see more live action trailers coming from our court in the future.

Okay, so let's take this discussion online. Hop over to the Author Revolution Facebook Group and let's talk about list-aiming. Is it what you expected? Or were you surprised how much money, time, and effort actually goes into it? I know I was definitely surprised. But whatever the case, I want to know what you think.

Don't forget you can also download the show notes as well by heading to [authorrevolution.org/44](http://authorrevolution.org/44).

Next week, I might have a great interview set up for those of you who want to automate your author business. My friend and mentor Stephen Gordon has graciously offered to be a part of the podcast, so stay tuned!

A final reminder: this podcast episode is sponsored by the Windhaven Witches. The Windhaven Witches is a rapid release series that will be coming at you, starting September 15th. If you're a fan of the supernatural, mysteries, and mythologies, this is the series for you. Secret Legacy, Book 1, is only 99¢ wherever books are sold – ebook form, of course. In addition, 50% of the royalties from that book are being donated to the American Cancer Society. Head over to Amazon, Barnes & Noble, or Apple iBooks today to preorder your copy.

Alright my writerly friend, until next time... Go forth and start your author revolution.



**EPISODE 44: LIST-AIMING WITH A RAPID RELEASE SERIES**

[WWW.AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/44](http://WWW.AUTHORREVOLUTION.COM/44)