

Testimonials



Matt Nixon, Features Editor, Daily Express and previously Books Editor, Mail on Sunday: “Karen is one of British publishing’s most professional and dynamic figures. Her serial and PR campaigns are second to none and she’s a pleasure to work with. Seeing Karen’s name attached to a book project goes a long way to making it a success before I’ve read a single word, such is her ability to make things happen.”

James Mannion, Entertainment Director, Mail on Sunday & You Magazine: “Karen is the perfect PR. She knows publications and audiences inside out so when she calls about a project you know it’s one to pay attention to.”

Previous colleagues and stakeholders within UK publishing:

Perminder Mann, Chief Executive Officer, Bonnier Books UK: “Karen has worked with Bonnier Books UK for over 9 years, most recently as campaigns director for fiction and non-fiction across our adult trade business. She is an experienced and trusted publicist, building great relationships with authors and senior stakeholders across the organisation to deliver exceptional campaigns every time. Karen is also extremely strategic, applying her knowledge of the promotional landscape and the readers to inform decisions across the publishing process from acquisition to publication, and enhancing the impact of our campaigns across the division.”

Kate Parkin, Managing Director of Adult Trade Publishing, Bonnier Books UK, 2018-23:

“A respected and experienced voice in the media industry, Karen’s contributions to a wider publishing strategy are always well thought-out and creative. Her communication skills are excellent, both internally and externally, and her smooth, unruffled management of staff and authors is exemplary, as is her handling of serial rights. Here, Karen’s unrivalled Fleet Street contacts pay real dividends: her ability to direct a high-profile PR strategy while simultaneously keeping a major newspaper on side is exceptional. With Karen’s focus on a major campaign, I felt confident the team would deliver our publishing objectives. As well as her work on individual campaigns, Karen’s wisdom and publishing knowledge proved invaluable in our acquisition pitches. With her engagement from the very beginning of a project, I knew every PR angle would be covered and that her presentations, in person or in writing, would be persuasive, realistic and professional. The close relationships she has built up over the years with key journalists and other media stakeholders enabled us, as a relatively new publisher, to punch far above our weight, contributing significantly to our rapid growth in a very competitive market. It was a privilege to work with Karen at Bonnier Books UK and I warmly recommend her to any organisation looking for a high-level, effective and strategic PR consultant.”

Andrew Sauerwine, Group Sales & Strategy Director, Bonnier Books: “Karen is one of the most dedicated, knowledgeable and professional PR Directors I’ve worked with across a career spanning almost 20 years. Down to earth and approachable which makes her loved by authors and in-house teams equally, but also unflappable when inevitable challenges arise, she would add huge value to any publicity team looking to be the best in the business.”

Jon Watt, Audio Director, Bonnier Books UK: “Karen is efficient, creative and positive. Her enthusiasm and sense of fun are infectious and make working with her a joy. She looks to create solutions rather than dwelling on problems - which is a fantastic and valued asset”

Matthew Phillips, Publishing Director BBUK: “Experienced, wise, capable, good with authors, good with agents, good with acquisitions. A team player. Solid Gold.”

Francesca Russell, Trade Publicity Director, Bonnier Books: “We worked closely together from 2020 and Karen has been a mentor to all of us in the team. As an ex-journalist, there is no one better to handle mad serial negotiations, stay calm in a storm and manage big personalities. Karen’s relationships are second to none and she is a favourite with key agents, journalists, events bookers, broadcasters...she is also completely beloved by her authors for her expertise, sense of fun and sensitivity.”

Pete Selby, Publisher, Nine Eight Books: “Karen would be an incredible asset to any book campaign. Experienced and perceptive, her tenacity and ability to make things happen is matched only by her warm, personable manner. She is loved and respected throughout the industry for very good reason.”

Ben Dunn, MD Kings Road Publishing: “Karen ran our adult publicity department during the 3 years we worked together. Karen also ran many of our high-profile campaigns during this time; not only leading the department but also never missing a beat when representing some very high maintenance talent. Karen is truly the best, bar none, in a very demanding role, that I have had the privilege to work with in my 25 years as a publisher; her commitment, fantastic energy, and light-hearted yet professional approach, sometimes under severe provocation, are what really mark Karen out as a true one-off. Any company would benefit from having Karen on board; not just as a publicity director of enormous experience, but also as a peerless team leader and wonderful colleague.”

Emily Thomas, Publisher: “I worked with the inimitable Karen between 2014 and 2016, when I was publisher of the ‘Blink Reality’ list for Bonnier UK. She was both a wonderful colleague and a tour de force as head of PR for Bonnier adult non-fiction. Strategic, focused, dynamic – yet calm in a crisis – Karen is incredibly resourceful and creative when it comes to creating and realising her brilliant campaigns – and always a big hit with authors and agents. She is a fabulous manager, instilling loyalty and trust in her team, and inspiring the same hard work and dedication that she herself exemplifies. With authoritative and solid experience across many distinct kinds of publishing, Karen always brings her formidable skill, passion, wit and charm to everything she does, and is a hugely diplomatic and reassuring presence for both celebrity and non-celebrity authors and their agents. I cannot recommend her highly enough as a PR genius at the top of her game.”

Stuart Proffitt – Publishing Director, Penguin Press: “I have worked with Karen on many books and always look forward to doing so. She is cheerful, efficient, imaginative and has one of the qualities I admire most in a publicist – real determination. Authors like dealing with her too. I warmly recommend her.”

Rosie Glaisher – Publicity Director, Penguin Press:

“I think Karen's middle name is Versatility - she has worked brilliantly for us on such an interesting, much-admired range of campaigns, with authors present and willing as well as those more distant, and she's always happy to adapt as possibilities and realities become clearer. Happily, Karen is also delightful to work with.”

Stephanie Faber – Director, Faber & Bishopp PR:

“Tamara and I first met Karen when we were all part of Five’s in-house publicity team. There she created some incredibly high-profile campaigns for the channel’s popular factual and wildlife series. She was an integral part of the team and liked by all her producers and presenters. Since setting up our own specialist PR consultancy for the broadcast and entertainment industry, Karen has worked with us again as a freelance consultant. She’s professional, can stay calm under pressure, think of imaginative ways to PR a project, reassures and protects talent and is fun to work with. We won’t hesitate to use her again in future.”

Gail McKenzie – Communications Consultant

“From the day Karen joined me in the BBC Publicity team in Bristol in 2000 I knew she had real talent. She has that rare ability to clearly identify stories, plan campaigns and get results – the whole communications package. Together we worked on major series such as Blue Planet, and she also managed successful publicity campaigns for TV’s popular Wildlife on One and BBC Radio 4 Natural History output. Since then we’ve worked on freelance consultancy projects together, and I can honestly say she’s a true PR professional and a joy to work with.”

Celebrity Autobiographies/Memoirs:

“Karen, you are the very best I have ever had taking care of me.” **Burt Reynolds, memoir ‘But Enough About Me’**

“You have been a joy to work with” **Roger Daltrey, The Who – memoir ‘Thanks A Lot, Mr Kibblewhite’**

“It has been a pleasure working with you – calm, great company and a pro of course!” **Roger’s PA, Jools.**

“To the amazing Karen! You are a total star and this is your book really. So much fun watching and learning from you” **Kate Garraway, memoir ‘The Joy of Big Knickers’**

“Thanks for everything. Team Button is going to miss that laugh!” **Jenson Button, memoir ‘Life to the Limit’ and ‘How To Be An F1 Driver’**

James Williamson, The Sports Partnership (worked with Jenson Button and David Coulthard): “Karen was able to not only put together a fantastic strategy for Jenson Button’s autobiography but crucially has the contacts and expertise to execute it. A pleasure to work with and an integral part of the book success.”

“Thanks for being brilliant” **David Coulthard, author of ‘The Winning Formula’**

Martin Roach, ghostwriter The Winning Formula by David Coulthard: “A belated thank you to you for the amazing PR job you did on this title. I was so impressed, and in fact this played a major part in my thinking about who my next book should go with. So that’s all, just a simple note, doffing my cap to you for all the superb efforts!”

“Great work!” **Rio Ferdinand, memoir ‘#2Sides’**

“Karen is fab! She got fantastic PR for my book and we had such a giggle doing all the TV, radio and press together. Thank you for everything darling.” **Russell Grant, book ‘The Art of Astrology’**

“Karen, thanks so much for all your hard work” **Michelle Mone, memoir ‘My Fight to the Top’**

“Thanks for keeping us very busy!” **Jonathan & Alistair Brownlee, authors ‘Swim, Bike, Run’**

“Thanks so much for all your help and support” **Toni Terry, author ‘The Buddy Workout’**

“Wonderful to know and work with you – thank you for doing such a terrific job and for being so great! Ken.” **Sir Ken Robinson, author of ‘Finding Your Element’**

“Karen joined a campaign that was in a bit of a muddle. She calmly sorted, prioritised, listened and achieved great results in rapid time. What a professional” **Helen Lederer, comedian, actress and TV personality**

Real Life & News Agenda Books

“Karen Stretch ran the publicity campaigns for my books *Operation Trojan Horse* and *The Secret History of Flight 149*. It was a challenging assignment - books about government secrets with victims scattered in 15 different countries. Karen carried off the task superbly, co-ordinating UK and international media. In particular, she organised a complicated combined book launch and reunion with in-person and online participation. She dealt confidently with both media demands and the emotions of the victims who gathered in London. I got tremendous worldwide publicity, thanks to Karen. I would have no hesitation in recommending her for any PR or event project.”

Stephen Davis, journalist/author/educator/podcaster.

“Karen thanks so much for all the hard work you did over my campaign. You were so kind and very supportive in so many ways and I really appreciated your advice. I have to agree you’re the best in the business.” **‘Kill The Black One First’ A Memoir by Michael Fuller, Britain’s First Black Police Chief Constable**

“An author can rise or falls his or her publicist as its they who make or break an author and their book. I'm pleased to say I got the very best of the best in Karen at Bonnier/Blink. From day one on the publicity trail before and after publication of 'On Duty With The Queen' my feet didn't touch the ground. There were TV and radio interviews on all the UK networks as well as networks in Australia, New Zealand, the USA and Canada. As for newspapers & magazines - my two-inch cuttings file is testimony to the hard work put in by Karen and her team of publicists. Social media played its part particularly on Twitter. Without Karen and her team my book wouldn't still be selling four years after publication. Karen, you're an absolute star – thank you for being there.”

Dickie Arbiter – author of ‘On Duty with the Queen’

“Thank you for arranging and organising my press so very efficiently. I had a lovely day and enjoyed meeting all those very interesting people and of course meeting you and spending the day with you. I found it fascinating and enjoyed every minute. Thank you for you hospitality, so kind and so generous.”

June Bernicoff – author of ‘Leon & June: Our Story’ (Gogglebox)

“I couldn't have done it without you, thank you so much for your fantastic support. You have been so good to me and I am hugely grateful. I am fully aware that a good support team is indispensable and worth its weight in gold. You are an impressive and hardworking businesswoman, that's for sure!”

Penny Farmer – author of ‘Dead in the Water’

“Dearest Karen, I love being on the road with you. Thank you for travelling the miles with me – it’s been a joy.” **Film director Carol Morley – author of ‘7 Miles Out’**

“Karen, you are incredible – thank you for working so hard on this book and for the laughs you nutter!”
Amber Tozer – author of ‘Sober Stick Figure’

“My Wonderful Karen, You have been so supportive with getting my story out there. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.” **Phil Mews author of ‘Orphan Boys’**

Testimonials from Penguin Press authors, 2009-2013

Martin Jacques – author of *When China Rules the World

“I have worked with many publicists all around the world over the last five years and I can honestly say without any equivocation that Karen is one of the top three. Nothing is too much work. She is full of initiative. She is incredibly efficient. And she is always a pleasure to deal with. In my experience a very rare combination. In short, a wonderful person to work with.”

Lord Robert Skidelsky – author of *How Much is Enough

“Karen has been invaluable during the process of promoting *How Much Is Enough?* Her insight and contacts, and her commitment to ensuring that the book finds its audience, have been a crucial element in its success.”

Norman Davies – author of *Vanished Kingdoms

“Karen provided sterling assistance for the promotional campaigns of both the hardback and paperback editions of *‘Vanished Kingdoms’*, playing a major part in the book’s success. Karen’s efficiency, dependability and thoughtfulness put her in the premiership of her profession.”

Sir Ken Robinson – author of *Finding Your Element*

“Karen looked after the Penguin UK publicity tour for my most recent book *Finding Your Element*. She ensured everything went smoothly and is fun to work with.”

Susannah Cahalan – author of *Brain on Fire

“Karen is a force. She dived into a project with full verve and passion that is just plain incredible. I had the pleasure of working with Karen on the British publication of my memoir *Brain on Fire*. And by our first conference call I knew I had hit the jackpot with a fantastic publicist. She had a game plan. She thought outside of the box. She shot for the stars. And she landed there: Karen booked me in all the major UK newspapers, hooked me up with reviews in academic journals, and landed me on several high-profile TV shows. But perhaps the most remarkable thing she did was to connect me with The Encephalitis Society in the UK, which with Karen’s help honoured my book with a sold-out event at a national chain bookstore. Now I am permanently connected with the organization as its first international ambassador - all thanks to Karen. Karen is a national treasure.”

Brendan Simms – author of *Europe, The Struggle for Supremacy

“Karen worked wonders publicising my book *‘Europe. Struggle for supremacy’*. I received coverage across the full range of national and international media and all my events were meticulously planned and executed - there were no hitches! I don’t know what I would have done without her.”

Patrick Hennessey, author of *The Junior Officer’s Reading Club and Kandak

“I’m quite sure that one of the few things more challenging than having to work with, coordinate and cajole a writer is having to do all those things with a writer who is also working full time at something

else. Publicising a book effectively is difficult enough when the writer is focused solely on that task, so I can only imagine how difficult it is when the writer is also a barrister and is supposed to be in court most of the time. I'm hugely grateful to Karen for pulling off the feat with *Kandak* so smoothly and with such good grace."

"A pleasure to meet you. Thanks for taking me around the BBC and beyond." **Gary Shteyngart – author of 'Little Failure'**