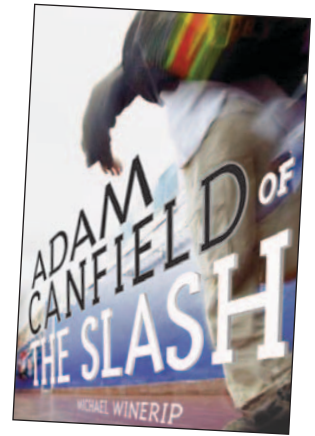


An Interview with Michael Winerip, Author of *ADAM CANFIELD OF THE SLASH*

Hot off the press from Pulitzer Prize–winning *New York Times* columnist Michael Winerip—it's his debut novel for young readers!

Meet Adam Canfield: He's the star reporter for the Harris Elementary-Middle school newspaper, the *Slash*, and he's involved in just about every other extracurricular activity, too—Gladiator quiz bowl, jazz band, statewide test prep class, you name it. And he's just been named coeditor of the *Slash* alongside his friend Jennifer. He wants to "live life on the edge, dig up the dirt, take dangerous risks for the public good." Somehow, he always finds himself just a few minutes late. But when a third grader delivers a scoop bigger than any the *Slash* has ever seen, only Adam can dig deep enough to crack through a cover-up that will rock the very foundations of Harris.



Adam Canfield of the Slash
by Michael Winerip
HC: 0-7636-2340-7
\$15.99/\$22.99 (CAN)
Ages 8–12

Candlewick: Many ideas for the plot lines in *Adam Canfield of the Slash* came from your newspaper columns. Can you fill us in?

Mike: Without giving away too much of the plot, I really did cover a smile contest in Louisville, Kentucky, and I really did write about a rich suburb on Long Island, New York, that tried to tear down everyone's basketball hoops. I also lived through a gold plumbing scandal that forced the resignation of a top school official in Miami, Florida. And I knew a man who made a living finding homes for ornery dogs and a lady who lived like a pauper but left a ton of money to her New Jersey town.

Candlewick: It seems as if there would be a big difference between writing for the *New York Times* and writing a children's novel. Did you have any difficulties composing your first young adult book?

Mike: When you write for a newspaper, even the *New York Times*, you learn to write as simply as possible and to use the clearest words. It's natural for me to use language that will suit kids.

Candlewick: *Adam Canfield* is a very funny, kid-friendly page turner, but it's also a vehicle for you, as a national education columnist for the *New York Times*, to express your views on current educational and social issues. How do you so seamlessly weave these into the text to convey a message?

Mike: I've spent more than thirty years as a reporter. Every bit of that has gone into writing *Adam Canfield of the Slash*, although my hope is that kids reading the book will barely notice. They need to be spending their time laughing a lot and worrying whether the *Slash's* star reporters can wipe out evil before it wipes them out. The social policy is quietly nestled in the background; it makes up the trappings that I hope will make the book feel different and fresh to kids.

Candlewick: When writing *Adam Canfield of the Slash*, did you look to any children's book authors for inspiration? Who are a few of your favorites?

Mike: My favorite children's writers are Jerry Spinelli, Katherine Paterson, E. B. White, Roald Dahl. And two of my favorite books are *The Tale of Despereaux* and *Because of Winn-Dixie*.

Candlewick: In your view, how important are trade books, like your own *Adam Canfield of the Slash*, in turning children into readers?

Mike: Part of the joy of reading is starting at the front cover and when you finally get to the back cover, closing that book and putting it away with a feeling of accomplishment and a tinge of sadness; the good ones always end too soon. *Adam Canfield of the Slash* is meant to be a fun read, but at the same time it's filled with all kinds of tough ethical problems that kids—and adults—try to puzzle through daily. I hope a young reader will see that you don't have to fly away to a faraway kingdom or ride on a magic train to find battles of epic proportion.