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***Populazzi* is latest YA book to get nabbed for the big screen**

*Bestselling author and Emmy Nominee Elise Allen's new Young Adult book POPULAZZI optioned by Wind Dancer Films*

**September 20, 2011 – Los Angeles, Calif.** - *New York Times* bestselling author and Emmy Award nominee Elise Allen is climbing the popularity ladder in both the literary world and now in Hollywood. Wind Dancer Films has optioned the feature rights to Allen's debut Young Adult novel *Populazzi*, a wild comedy about the dark side of climbing the popularity tower which hit bookstores in August to rave reviews.

Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Children's Book Group, *Populazzi* is Allen's debut solo novel. She also co-wrote the *New York Times* bestselling *Elixir* with Hilary Duff, and the forthcoming *Elixir* sequel, *Devoted*. *Girl's Life Magazine* named *Populazzi* one of the Top Forty Hits of the Summer, while *Publisher's Weekly* raved, "Allen offers a smart mix of hilarity and tragedy in this Macbeth-meets-Mean Girls tale." *Kirkus Reviews* wrote, "the story unflinchingly depicts the dark and dangerous side of high school popularity, making it a captivating read."

Wind Dancer Films executives agreed with the rave reviews and will be bringing the novel to the big screen.

"The book is hilarious -- the perfect mix of darkly twisted, sexy, and gut wrenchingly real," said Dete Meserve, President of Wind Dancer. "We were immediately drawn to it, and couldn't stop flipping pages. We knew right away we wanted to bring it to the screen."

*Populazzi* is Wind Dancer's second foray into Young Adult book adaptations. The company is currently in production on *As Cool As I Am*, a book adaptation starring James Marsden and Claire Danes. Talent for the movie adaptation of *Populazzi* will be attached soon; meantime, the book hit stores in August, and is available online and wherever books are sold.

**About *Populazzi***

What would you do if you had the chance to erase your past and reinvent yourself as the person you've always wanted to be? Would you grab it? Would you stick with it, no matter what the consequences? Cara Leonard always wished she could be one of those girls: confident, self-possessed, and never at a loss for the perfect thing to say. One of the *Populazzi*.

It always seemed impossible... but now could be her chance.

When Cara moves to a new school just before junior year, her best friend urges her to seize the opportunity and change her life... with the help of The Ladder. Its rungs are relationships, and if

Cara transforms herself into the perfect girlfriend for guys higher and higher on the Popularity Tower, she can reach the ultimate goal: Supreme Populazzi, the most popular girl in school.

The Ladder seems like a lighthearted social experiment — a straight climb up — but it quickly becomes gnarled and twisted. And when everything goes wrong, only the most audacious act Cara can think of has a chance of setting things even a little bit right.

### **About Elise Allen**

In addition to her first YA novel, *Populazzi*, Elise Allen co-wrote Hilary Duff's *New York Times* bestseller *Elixir*, and its sequel, *Devoted*. She has also been a television writer for over ten years, with credits that span from prime time sitcoms like *Cosby* to her Emmy-nominated work on the PBS show *Dinosaur Train*. Find her online at [www.eliseallen.com](http://www.eliseallen.com), on Twitter [@EliseLAllen](https://twitter.com/EliseLAllen), and [Elise Allen's Author Page](#) on Facebook.

### **About Wind Dancer Films**

Wind Dancer Films is an independent motion picture and television development, production and financing company. The company was founded by Matt Williams and David McFadzean, who created and produced such television hits as "**Roseanne**" and "**Home Improvement**". Wind Dancer has developed and produced such successful films as "**What Women Want**" starring Mel Gibson and Helen Hunt (which earned \$350 million in worldwide box office) and "**Where The Heart Is**" starring Natalie Portman. Wind Dancer is working on a number of feature films including "Bernie" starring Jack Black and Matthew McConaughey (to be released in 2012), "**As Cool As I Am**" starring Claire Danes and James Marsden, which completed principal photography in June 2011, "**What Men Want**" written by Pete Chiarelli (*The Proposal*) for Paramount Pictures, "**BFF**" to be directed by Charles Shyer (*Father of the Bride*) and a remake of the hit German film, "**Over My Dead Body**" with director Andy Fickman (*The Game Plan*).

Among the company's slate of television development and production projects is a half-hour sitcom starring comedienne "**Leanne Morgan**" and "**Wildest Africa**" for on **Discovery International**.

### **About Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Trade & Reference Division**

With nearly two-centuries of award-winning history, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt's Trade and Reference Division continues to publish some of the most renowned novels, non-fiction, children's books and reference works in hardcover, Mariner Books trade paperbacks and ebooks. Its distinguished author list includes eight Nobel Prize winners, 47 Pulitzer Prize winners, 13 National Book Award winners, and more than 100 Caldecott, Newbery, Printz, and Silbert Medal and Honor recipients. HMH publishes such distinguished authors as Philip Roth, Temple Grandin, Tim O'Brien, and Umberto Eco, as well as The Best American series®, The American Heritage® family of dictionaries, *The Gourmet Cookbook* and other culinary classics, the Peterson Field Guides and books by J.R.R. Tolkien. Along with a celebrated lineup of children's authors, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Children's Book Group is the publisher of some of the best-loved children's books and book characters including Curious George, The Little Prince and *The Polar Express*. For more information, visit [www.hmhbooks.com](http://www.hmhbooks.com).