

## AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY



Trevor Noah is the most successful comedian in Africa and is the host of the Emmy® and Peabody® Award-winning “The Daily Show” on Comedy Central. Trevor received a 2020 Grammy Nomination for Best Comedy Album for “Trevor Noah: Son Of Patricia” and 2020 NAACP Image Award nominations for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series and Outstanding Host in a Talk or News/Information (Series or Special). Trevor originally joined “The Daily Show with Jon Stewart” in 2014 as a contributor.

In 2019, “The Daily Show with Trevor Noah” received two Primetime Emmy nominations, including Outstanding Variety Talk Series and Outstanding Interactive Program. Additionally, Trevor received the 2019 NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series, as well as nominations for Outstanding Talk Series, Outstanding Variety Show, Outstanding host in a Talk or News/Information.

Born in South Africa to a black South African mother and a white European father, Noah has hosted numerous television shows including South Africa’s music, television and film awards, and two seasons of his own late-night talk show, “Tonight with Trevor Noah.” Trevor has written, produced, and starred in 8 comedy specials. In 2019, Trevor launched a new podcast series “On Second Thought: The Trevor Noah Podcast” exclusively on Luminary. In his podcast, Trevor will challenge himself – and all of his listeners – to explore unfamiliar angles, embrace differing viewpoints, and celebrate the contradictions that make the modern world both bewildering and exciting.

In April 2018, Noah launched The Trevor Noah Foundation, a youth development initiative that enhances youth preparedness for higher education or entry into the workforce. Noah’s vision is a South Africa that advances because each generation builds and must grow beyond its predecessor. Through a partnership with Microsoft, the foundation is able to provide under-resourced schools with the opportunity to use technology as a tool to enhance the learning experience, as well as increase digital literacy beyond the classroom.

- Edited bio from Comedy Central press website, <https://press.cc.com/series/the-daily-show-with-trevor-noah/bio/435697>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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1. Trevor Noah opens his memoir with a story about being thrown from a car by his mother. In what ways does this story illustrate the overarching narrative of Trevor Noah's early life?
2. In *Born a Crime*, Noah seeks to dispel the myth that the ending of apartheid was bloodless. How much did you know about the end of apartheid before reading this book, and what did you learn about the history of South Africa by reading Noah's story?
3. One of the most impressive characteristics that Noah conveys about his mother is her faith. How did Patricia's faith impact young Trevor, and what do you think has been the lasting impression of Patricia's faith on Trevor Noah's life?
4. Trevor Noah learned to speak six different languages growing up. What impressed you about the ways that Trevor and his mother navigate neighborhoods, cultures, and family; and how did language make that possible?
5. With all of the challenges Trevor faced growing up, he was gifted by his mother's assurance that he was always wanted and loved by both of his parents. Given that knowledge, how did issues of race play out in Noah's relationships with those closest to him--his mother, father, grandparents, and cousins?
6. Noah recounts his mother's use of the Xhosa term Sun'qhela, "a phrase with many shades of meaning" including "don't undermine me", "don't underestimate me," and "just try me." Noah recalls that Sun'qhela is "a command and a threat, all at once." Were there any such phrases employed in your childhood, and if so, what were they?
7. In sharing his story, Trevor Noah shares the stories of many of his family members, including how the meanings of their names were reflected in their lives. His mother's name, Patricia Nombuyiselo Noah, means "She Who Gives Back." His grandfather, Temperance Noah, was anything but temperate, but his nickname "Tat Shisha", which translates loosely as "the smokin' hot grandpa", was a perfect fit. What insights does Noah's story offer about the ways that identity is both assigned and chosen?
8. A prominent character in this memoir is Noah's stepfather, Abel. The name "Abel" recalls the biblical character in the book of Genesis, but his stepfather's Tsonga name, Ngisaveni, means "Be afraid." Those two names would turn out to be indicative of his stepfather's public and private personas. How does Noah describe and wrestle with the issue of domestic violence?
9. Some of the most humorous and heartbreaking stories in *Born a Crime* are about young Trevor's early forays into relationships with girls. How did his parent's relationships with others influence his perspective on love and relationships?
10. A notable relationship in *Born a Crime* is between young Trevor and his dog, Fufi. What parallels might be drawn between the way Noah describes his dog Fufi and how he describes himself in his childhood and youth?
11. Noah describes, with hilarious detail, an incident that happened when he was home alone with his great-grandmother (Koko) and didn't want to use the outhouse. Which incidents, friends, or family members described in *Born a Crime* are most memorable to you?

12. Noah and his mother lived in a variety of neighborhoods over the years. How does racial segregation affect the daily lives of young Trevor and his mother? What connections can you identify between the challenges in transportation and housing faced by Noah's family and those faced by people living in poverty in racially segregated communities in the U.S. and Canada today?

<https://network.crcna.org/faith-nurture/new-resource-discussion-guide-born-crime-trevor-noah>

## BOOK REVIEWS

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### Publishers Weekly

Having thoroughly mined his South African upbringing in his standup comedy and monologues on The Daily Show, Noah here tells the whole story in this witty and revealing autobiography. Born to a black African mother and a white Swedish father, Noah violated the Immorality Act of 1927, which outlawed interracial relationships. Though apartheid ended a decade after Noah's birth, its legacy lived on in the country's nigh-inescapable ghettos and perpetual racial conflicts, continuing to affect his life as he came of age. Noah's story is the story of modern South Africa; though he enjoyed some privileges of the region's slow Westernization, his formative years were shaped by poverty, injustice, and violence. Noah is quick with a disarming joke, and he skillfully integrates the parallel narratives via interstitial asides between chapters to explain the finer details of African culture and history for the uninformed. Perhaps the most harrowing tales are those of his abusive stepfather, which form the book's final act (and which Noah cleverly foreshadows throughout earlier chapters), but equally prominent are the laugh-out-loud yarns about going to the prom, and the differences between "White Church" and "Black Church." (Nov.) © Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

### Library Journal

Many people know Noah as the current host of Comedy Central's The Daily Show; however, one doesn't need to be familiar with his comedy and commentary to enjoy this fascinating and funny memoir. Born during apartheid to a Swiss-German father and black Xhosa mother, Noah shares stories from his formative years when he often felt more like an outsider than the shining star he is today. His stories give insight into not only his personal history but the culture and history of South Africa. The subject matter is difficult, with violence, racism, and poverty all being part of his complex narrative. Despite his circumstances, Noah is able to find humor and love even in the worst of times, mostly owing to his strong-willed, independent, and devoutly Christian mother. VERDICT Noah is a talented performer, and language (he speaks several, including Zulu, Tswana, Afrikaans, and Tsonga) is such an important part of his story that it should be listened to in his own voice in order to be truly appreciated. Audio at its best.-Theresa Horn, St. Joseph Cty. P.L., South Bend, IN © Copyright 2017. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc.

### Kirkus Review

The host of The Daily Show reflects on his tumultuous South African childhood. In a gritty memoir, Noah relates his harsh experiences growing up during the final years of apartheid and the chaotic and racially charged conflicts that would continue to undermine the newly won freedom that was established in its aftermath. His story unfolds through

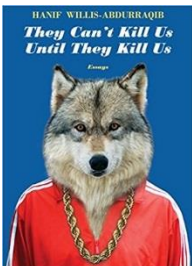
a series of loosely assembled essays that touch on his home life and school environment and later expand outward to various cities and neighborhoods and his encounters with petty crime and confrontations with domestic violence. Throughout, the author documents the evolving yet continually challenging race relations among blacks, whites, and coloreds. Noah was born the son of a white Swiss-German father and a devoutly Christian black Xhosa mother who purposely chose to have a child through a mixed relationship, with full understanding of the legal ramifications established under the Immorality Act of 1927, which banned illicit carnal relations between a native woman and a European male. Noah's mother proved to be the dominant, remarkable force throughout his life, constantly striving to instill deep values of education, religion, and freedom as she struggled with her own desire for independence. Perhaps even more amazing is the fact that my mother started her little project, me, at a time when she could not have known that apartheid would end, writes the author. There was no reason to think it would end; it had seen generations come and go. I was nearly six when Mandela was released, ten before democracy finally came, yet she was preparing me to live a life of freedom long before we knew freedom would exist. On the whole, though studded with insight and provocative social criticism, Noah's material doesn't feel fully digested. As an accomplished adult humorist looking back to his childhood self, the attempt to inject a humorous tone into these grim proceedings frequently hits an awkward note. A somewhat disjointed narrative with flashes of brilliant storytelling and acute observations on South African culture. Copyright Kirkus Reviews, used with permission.

## Booklist

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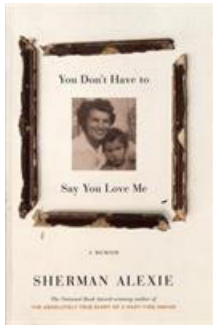
## READALIKES

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### ***They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us* by Hanif Abdurraqib**

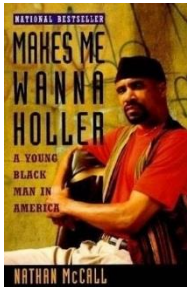
Abdurraqib uses music and culture as a lens through which to view our world, so that we might better understand ourselves, and in so doing proves himself a bellwether for our times.



### ***You Don't Have to Say You Love Me: A Memoir by Sherman Alexie***

Family relationships are never simple. But Sherman Alexie's bond with his mother Lillian was more complex than most. She plunged her family into chaos with a drinking habit, but shed her addiction when it was on the brink of costing her everything. She survived a violent past, but created an elaborate facade to hide the truth. She selflessly cared for strangers, but was often incapable of showering her children with the affection that they so desperately craved. She wanted a better life for her son, but it was only by leaving her behind that he could hope to achieve it. It's these contradictions that made Lillian Alexie a beautiful, mercurial, abusive, intelligent, complicated, and very human woman.

When she passed away, the incongruities that defined his mother shook Sherman and his remembrance of her. Grappling with the haunting ghosts of the past in the wake of loss, he responded the only way he knew how: he wrote. The result is a stunning memoir filled with raw, angry, funny, profane, tender memories of a childhood few can imagine, much less survive. An unflinching and unforgettable remembrance, *You Don't Have to Say You Love Me* is a powerful, deeply felt account of a complicated relationship.



### ***Makes Me Wanna Holler by Nathan McCall***

In this "honest and searching look at the perils of growing up a black male in urban America" (San Francisco Chronicle), Washington Post reporter Nathan McCall tells the story of his passage from the street and the prison yard to the newsroom of one of America's most prestigious papers.