

# Show Notes

**Date:** 10/7/2022

**Name of Podcast:** Read. Return. Repeat. A ReadICT Podcast.

**Episode Title and Number:** Banned Books Week Live (Season 2, Episode 7)

**Episode Summary:** In this episode in honor of Banned Books Week, co-hosts Sara Dixon and Daniel Pewewardy recorded a special edition of the podcast in front of a live audience to talk about why we celebrate Banned Books Week and the importance of the freedom to read. They are joined by Wichita Public Library Director Jaime Nix and Watermark Books & Café owner Sarah Bagby. Joining them virtually as the special guest is Sherman Alexie, author of *The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian*, published in 2007, which has consistently appeared on the list of frequently challenged books since 2008. Sherman talks about his experience as an indigenous writer, how he feels about writing a book that has been frequently challenged and even joins Sara and Daniel for a couple of banned book games!

**Guest Bio:** Sherman Alexie is a Spokane-Coeur d'Alene-Native American novelist, short story writer, poet, screenwriter, and filmmaker. His writings draw on his experiences as an Indigenous American with ancestry from several tribes. He grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation and now lives in Seattle, Washington.

His best-known book is *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993), a collection of short stories. It was adapted as the film *Smoke Signals* (1998), for which he also wrote the screenplay.

His first novel, *Reservation Blues*, received a 1996 American Book Award. His first young adult novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007), is a semi-autobiographical novel that won the 2007 U.S. National Book Award for Young People's Literature and the Odyssey Award as best 2008 audiobook for young people (read by Alexie). His 2009 collection of short stories and poems, *War Dances*, won the 2010 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction.

(source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherman\\_Alexie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sherman_Alexie))

## Topic Index:

About Banned Books Week (:40)

Dal Domebo (Board of Trustees Chair, Mid-America All-Indian Museum) talks about importance of access to reading (1:46)

Sarah Bagby talks about how Watermark Books celebrates Banned Books Week (5:25)

Jaime Nix talks about her most memorable experiences with book challenges (7:26)

Sarah Bagby talks about how book challenges affect sales of authors (14:27)

Sarah and Jaime talk about the importance of the freedom to read (15:59)

Sarah and Jaime talk about their favorite banned/challenged books (18:15)

Sarah and Jaime play game – guess the book based on a quote of a frequently banned book (19:35)

Book recommendation from Suzanne Perez, Reporter for KMUW (26:04)

Sherman Alexie Introduction (27:46)

Sherman talks about his reaction to having his books frequently challenged (29:13)

What made Sherman want to write Young Adult fiction? (30:46)

Being more tolerant in the current divisive environment (32:28)

The role of race and racism in book challenges (34:02)

Sherman talks about the reception of his film *Smoke Signals* (36:48)

Balancing comedy and tragedy (40:03)

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Sherman's favorite genre/format to write (43:04)

Sherman's most challenging genre/format to write (45:30)

Writing the novel *Flight* (47:04)

Sherman's book recommendations of frequently challenged books (48:33)

Sherman plays game – guess the reason why a book was challenged (49:55)

Book recommendation by Sean Jones, Communications Specialist for Wichita Public Library (56:34)

Sherman reads his poem "Witness" (1:00:58)

**Books/literary works mentioned in this episode:**

*One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Ken Kesey

*The Diary of a Young Girl*, Anne Frank

*The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Mark Twain

*The Handmaid's Tale*, Margaret Atwood

*You Don't Have to Say You Love Me*, Sherman Alexie

*The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13 ¾*, Sue Townsend

*The Basketball Diaries*, Jim Carroll

*Slaughterhouse Five*, Kurt Vonnegut

*The Things They Carried*, Tim O'Brien

*Skippyjon Jones Series*, Judith Byron Schachner

*A Day in the Life of Marlon Bundo*, Jill Twiss

*The Adventures of Taxi Dog*, Debra and Sal Barracca

*Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*, Judy Blume

**Films/TV shows mentioned in this episode:**

*Smoke Signals*, 1998 (Director: Chris Eyre)

**Books recommended in this episode:**

*Melissa* (previously titled *George*), Alex Gino

*To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee

**Resources & Links:**

About Sherman Alexie

[Sherman Alexie's website](#)

[Sherman Alexie's poetry on Substack](#)

[Sherman Alexie biography at Poetryfoundation.org](#)

Books by Sherman Alexie

**Standalone Novels**

*Reservation Blues* (1995)

*Indian Killer* (1996)

*Flight* (2007)

*The Absolutely True Story of a Part-Time Indian* (2007)

*War Dances* (2009)

*Radioactive Love Song* (2009)

### **Screenplays**

*Smoke Signals* (1993)

*Business of Fancydancing: The Screenplay* (2003)

### **Picture books**

*Thunder Boy Jr.* (2016)

### **Short Story/Poetry Collections**

*The Business of Fancydancing: Stories and Poems* (1991)

*Old Shirts and New Skins* (1993)

*First Indian on the Moon* (1993)

*The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven* (1993)

*Water Flowing Home* (1995)

*The Summer of Black Widows* (1996)

*The Man Who Loves Salmon* (1998)

*The Toughest Indian in the World* (2000)

*One Stick Song* (2000)

*Ten Little Indians* (2003)

*Face* (2009)

*Blasphemy* (2012)

*What I've Stolen, What I've Earned* (2013)

*The Best American Poetry 2015* (2015)

### **Non-Fiction Books**

*Home Field* (1997)

*Conversations With Sherman Alexie* (2009)

*You Don't Have to Say You Love Me* (2017)

## Other Resources

[Mid-America All-Indian Museum](#)

[Wichita Short Story Dispenser](#)

[Instagram Poetry](#)

**Full Transcript:** [http://wichitalibrary.org/BooksMore/podcast/Pages/rrr\\_s2e7.aspx](http://wichitalibrary.org/BooksMore/podcast/Pages/rrr_s2e7.aspx)

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