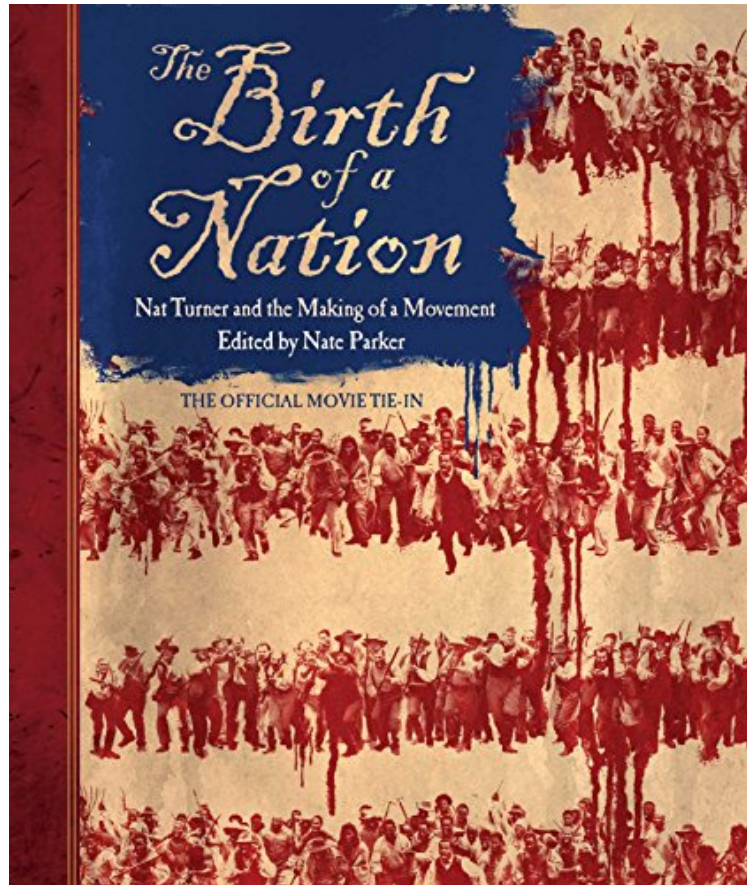


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The Birth of a Nation: Nat Turner and the Making of a Movement

Nate Parker

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Nate Parker : The Birth of a Nation: Nat Turner and the Making of a Movement before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Birth of a Nation: Nat Turner and the Making of a Movement:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. A Necessary readBy ShawnAfter watching the beautiful piece of art film, I had to read the book. I've learned so much in just a few weeks of reading this book. I will keep the words of wisdom with me in my journey to the truth and liberation of oppressed people, especially black people!4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Jai D. HudsonInteresting complement to a epic movie. Had some facts about the movie and Nat that I really appreciated learning.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. terrible bookBy WadeI bought his expecting to read the story. This book is broken down into various sections of history and events; long and boring!

This official tie-in to the highly acclaimed film, The Birth of a Nation, surveys the history and legacy of Nat Turner, the leader of one of the most renowned slave rebellions on American soil, while also exploring Turners relevance to contemporary dialogues on race relations.Based on astounding events in American history, The Birth of a Nation is the

epic story of one man championing the spirit of resistance as he leads a rough-and-tumble group into a revolt against injustice and slavery. Breathing new life into a story that has been rife with controversy and prejudice for over two centuries, the film follows the rise of the visionary Virginian slave, Nat Turner. Hired out by his owner to preach to and placate slaves on drought-plagued plantations, Turner eventually transforms into an inspired, impassioned, and fierce anti-slavery leader. Beautifully illustrated with stills from the movie and original illustrations, the book also features an essay by writer/director, Nate Parker, contributions by members of the cast and crew, and commentary by educator Brian Favors and historians Erica Armstrong Dunbar and Daina Ramey Berry who place Nat Turner and the rebellion he led into historical context. *The Birth of a Nation* reframes the way we think about slavery and resistance as it explores the passion, determination, and faith that inspired Nat Turner to sacrifice everything for freedom.

About the Author Nate Parker is an actor, director, screenwriter, and producer. Since his breakout role in *The Great Debaters*, alongside Denzel Washington and Forrest Whitaker all of whom received NAACP Image Awards for their respective roles Parker has gone on to star in such films as *The Secret Life of Bees*, *Red Hook Summer*, and *Non-Stop* while working with Hollywood greats such as Liam Neeson, Terrance Howard, Cuba Gooding, Jr., and Spike Lee. Parker also works with numerous charity organizations such as 100 Men of Excellence, Boys and Girls Club of America and Peace4Kids. His film *The Birth of a Nation* sold at the Sundance Film Festival for a record-shattering \$17.5 million and is set to release in October 2016. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

The Birth of a Nation My Journey with Nat Turner BY NATE PARKER And I saw, and behold a white horse: and he that sat on him had a bow; and a crown was given unto him: and he went forth conquering, and to conquer. REVELATION 6:2 (KJV) How many of you know who Nat Turner is? I wasn't the only one staring blankly at my African-American Studies professor. I'd overheard the name once or twice in my childhood, but without context—the where, the why, and the what of his story—his name had no resonance. My instructor paused a beat more before alleviating our curiosity. Nat Turner led the most successful slave revolt in American history. The words slave and revolt in the same sentence seemed incongruent. He went on, This revolt would not only send shock waves across this entire nation, but would aid in precipitating the American Civil War. I blinked back incredulity. Anyone who knew anything of American history knew enslaved Africans endured, but didn't dare fight. Anyone whose education mirrored my own knew it was benevolent Abe Lincoln who, following his moral compass, led this country to war, with the hope of freeing the slaves. This was what I had been taught, facts inscribed in the history books of my youth. If this Nat Turner truly existed, wouldn't he, too, have been in those same books? It made no sense. As confused as I was, it was my professor's next statement that rocked me the most. This revolt... it took place in Southampton County, Virginia. As the saying goes, you could have knocked me over with a feather. I grew up in Norfolk, Virginia, about forty-two miles east of Southampton County, Virginia. A decade of history courses and yet not once had there been a lesson, a lecture, or an assignment about the slave preacher, General Nat—the literate man of God who would engage in a holy war, sacrificing all he had to lead his people out of bondage. At that moment, I vowed to never again take another person's word regarding the narrative of my ancestors. It was then that I took hold of my miseducation and became hell-bent on untangling the twisted threads of its revisionist narrative. My independent study led me not only to Nat Turner but also to countless others who rose and fell in the name of liberation: Toussaint Louverture, Gabriel Prosser, Denmark Vesey, and Jean-Jacques Dessalines, to name a few. This desperate journey toward truth became my purpose, my North Star. It would not only serve in expanding my knowledge regarding this country's past, it would serve as the impetus of my desire to explore Nat Turner's life using the platform of film. When I decided to produce a film on Nat Turner, I wanted to be very intentional about drawing parallels between the past and the present. I felt this would be the best way to provide context to many of the obstacles we face as I write with race in this country and in the entertainment industry. In society, there have been countless culprits responsible for both planting and spreading seeds of racial injustice. In film, all signals point to D.W. Griffith and his 1915 propaganda film *The Birth of a Nation*. This film was not only successful in influencing a massive swath of the country's population to embrace white supremacy as a form of self-preservation, it also laid a rock-solid foundation for this country's interracial affairs, one that still stands today. Set during the Civil War and Reconstruction, this film used carefully arranged moving images to tap deeply into the subconscious of an entire nation. In the wake of the film's release, we saw not only the resurgence of the near extinct Ku Klux Klan, but also the then president of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, hail the movie as a massive triumph. While studying this film, two things became immediately clear to me. First, that we are now harvesting the results of the seeds planted by Griffith all those years ago. And second, if we as an industry are to move forward, we must confront the injuries of our past. Reclaiming Griffith's title and repurposing it as a tool for progress and social justice was, in my mind, a good first step. The title, *The Birth of a Nation*, became a call to action, a challenge to all to birth a new nation of storytellers, truth speakers, and justice seekers. What Griffith used to hardwire, I would use to rewire. What he used for subjugation, I would use for liberation. I had a plan. I had a title. I had my hero. Yet I had no script. When I began writing the script, I knew I wanted to present the story of a hero. I was less interested in the typical slave narrative, which hinges upon rampant victimization where the enslaved have little recourse. Instead, I wanted a story in which the hero clearly sees resistance as an option to overcoming his oppression. Brian Favors, an

educator, wrote in reference to the film, Individuals like Patrick Henry, known for his revolutionary ideals of liberty or death, and William Braveheart Wallace are deemed heroic because of their courage to pay the ultimate price for freedom against obstacles that are too frightening for most to confront. For people of African descent, who continue to experience racial oppression, cultural heroes are in short supply. Patrick Henry's belief that the great object is that every man be armed. Everyone who is able may have a gun, was part of an American tradition that so revered freedom from colonial oppression that the use of violence to resist was considered sacrosanct. His heroic declaration of give me liberty or give me death, serves as a symbol of strength and sacrifice to white Americans who continue to utilize this battle cry to cultivate patriotism and pride. Unfortunately, black heroes who exhibit acts of courage in the face of racial oppression are rarely, if ever, acknowledged.