

Ta-Nehisi Coates

Ta-Nehisi Coates (/ˌtɑːnəˈhɑːsi ˈkoʊts/ ***TAH-nə-HAH-see KOHTS***^[1] born September 30, 1975)^[2] is an American writer, journalist, and educator. Coates is a senior editor for *The Atlantic*, and blogger for that publication's website, where he writes about cultural, social and political issues. Coates has worked for *The Village Voice*, *Washington City Paper*, and *Time*. He has contributed to *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *The Washington Monthly*, *O*, and other publications. In 2008 he published a memoir, *The Beautiful Struggle: A Father, Two Sons, and an Unlikely Road to Manhood*. He joined the City University of New York as its journalist-in-residence in the fall of 2014.^[3] His second book, *Between the World and Me*, was released in July 2015.

1 Early life, education, personal life

Coates grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. His father, William Paul Coates, was a Vietnam War veteran and former Black Panther. His mother, Cheryl, was the breadwinner in the family and his father was a stay-at-home dad who ran Black Classic Press, a small publishing house specializing in African-American studies^[4] during Ta-Nehisi's childhood.^[5] Ta-Nehisi's father had seven children.^[6] Coates says that *Ta-Nehisi* is an Egyptian name for ancient Nubia.^[7]

Coates had an interest in books at an early age and his mother punished bad behavior by making him write essays.^[8] Coates attended a number of Baltimore-area schools, including Baltimore Polytechnic Institute, before graduating from Woodlawn High School.^[9] After high school, he enrolled in Howard University but dropped out to become a journalist.^{[10][11]} He currently resides in Harlem with his wife and son.^[12] He is an atheist and a feminist.^{[13][14][15]}

2 Career

In 2008, Coates published *The Beautiful Struggle*, a memoir about coming of age in West Baltimore and its effect on him.^{[16][17]} In it, he discusses the influence of his father, a former Black Panther; the prevailing street crime of the era and its effects on his older brother;^[18] his own troubled experience attending Baltimore-area



Coates at the 2010 Brooklyn Book Festival

schools;^{[9][19]} and his eventual graduation and enrollment in Howard University.^[9]

Coates is a senior editor at *The Atlantic*, for which he writes feature articles besides maintaining a blog. Topics covered by the blog include politics, history, race, culture as well as sports, and music. His writings on race, such as his September 2012 *Atlantic* cover piece "Fear of a Black President"^{[12][20][21]} and his June 2014 feature "The Case for Reparations,"^{[22][23]} have been especially praised, and have won his blog a place on the Best Blogs of 2011 list by *Time* magazine.^[24] and the 2012 Hillman Prize for Opinion & Analysis Journalism from The Sidney Hillman Foundation.^{[12][25]} Coates' blog has also been praised for its engaging comments section, which Coates curates and moderates heavily so that, "the jerks are invited to leave [and] the grown-ups to stay and chime in".^{[26][27][28]}

Coates was the 2012–14 MLK visiting professor for writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a guest columnist for the *New York Times*, having turned down an offer from them to become a regular columnist.^[12] He has also written for *The Village Voice*, *Washington City Paper*, *Time*, *The Washington Post*, the

Washington Monthly and *O* magazine.^{[12][29]}

Coates's second book, *Between the World and Me*, was published in July 2015.^[30]

3 Awards

- 2012 Hillman Prize for Opinion and Analysis Journalism.^[31]
- 2013 National Magazine Award for Essays and Criticism for "Fear of a Black President".^[32]
- 2014 George Polk Award for Commentary for "The Case for Reparations".^[33]
- 2015 Harriet Beecher Stowe Center Prize for Writing to Advance Social Justice for "The Case for Reparations".^[34]

4 Bibliography

This list is incomplete; you can help by expanding it.

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4.2 Essays and reporting

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6 External links

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- His *Atlantic* blog

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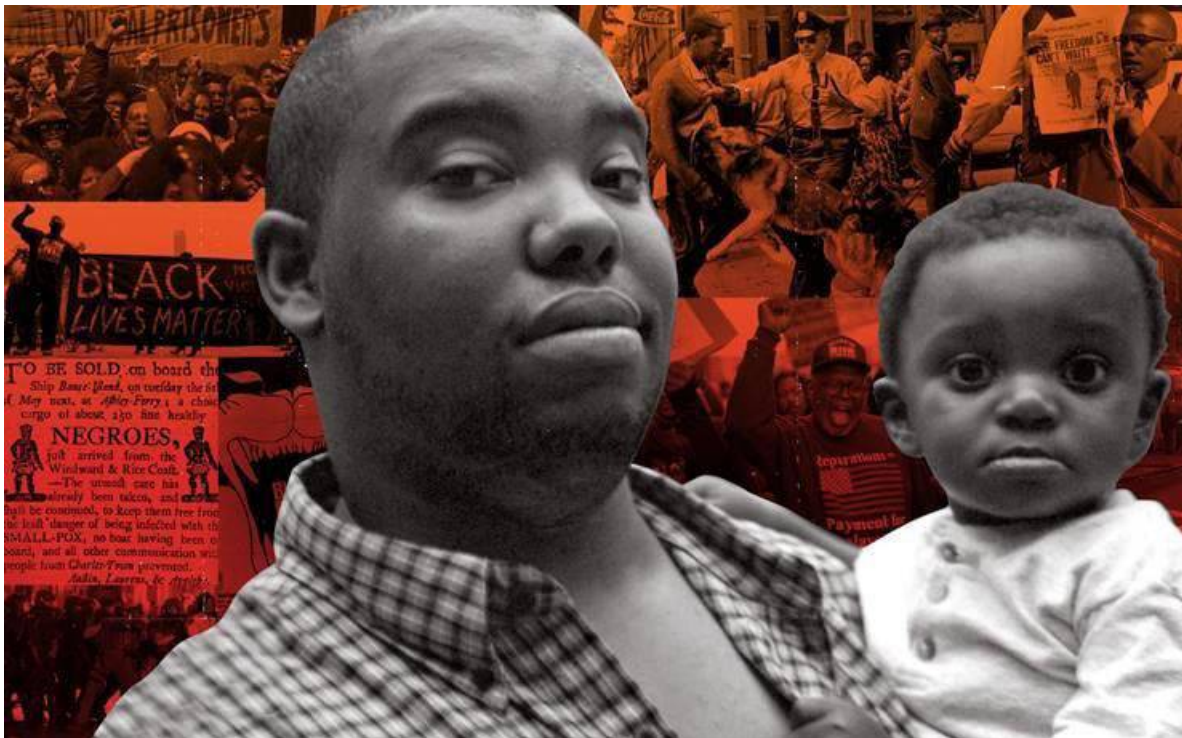
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Ta-Nehisi Coates: [The Atlantic](#)



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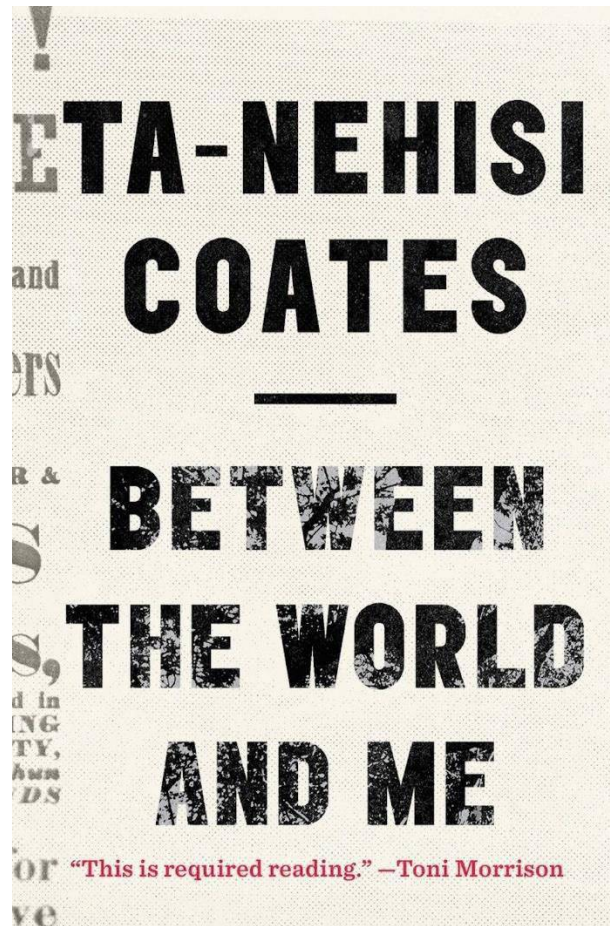
Ta-Nehisi Coates is a national correspondent at *The Atlantic*, where he writes about culture, politics, and social issues. He is the author of *The Beautiful Struggle* and the forthcoming *Between the World and Me*.



[Letter to My Son](#)

Last Sunday the host of a popular news show asked me what it meant to lose my body. The host was broadcasting from Washington, D.C., and I was seated in a remote studio on the Far West Side of Manhattan. A satellite closed the miles between us, but no machinery could close the gap

between her world and the world for which I had been summoned to speak. When the host asked me about my body, her face faded from the screen, and was replaced by a scroll of words, written by me earlier that week.



The host read these words for the audience, and when she finished she turned to the subject of my body, although she did not mention it specifically. But by now I am accustomed to intelligent people asking about the condition of my body without realizing the nature of their request. Specifically, the host wished to know why I felt that white America's progress, or rather the progress of those Americans who believe that they are white, was built on looting and violence. Hearing this, I felt an old and indistinct sadness well up in me. The answer to this question is the record of the believers themselves. The answer is American history.

This article is adapted from Coates's [forthcoming book](#).



Spider-Man in Love

After an eight-year separation, Marvel seems to be hinting at a reunion for Peter Parker and Mary Jane Watson—who embody what a healthy, mature marriage looks like.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Jan 27, 2015



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[I Might Be Charlie](#)

All nations like to begin the story with the chapter that most advantages them.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Jan 14, 2015



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[Why the NYPD Turned Its Back on the City](#)

Does believing the police are constantly under fire serve a productive function for society?

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Jan 5, 2015



Blue Lives Matter

Talking about "police reform" obscures the task. Today's policies are, at the very least, the product of democratic will.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Dec 22, 2014



The New Republic: An Appreciation

It is impossible to avoid the conclusion that black lives didn't matter much at all to the magazine.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Dec 9, 2014



Barack Obama, Ferguson, and the Evidence of Things Unsaid

Violence works. Nonviolence does too.

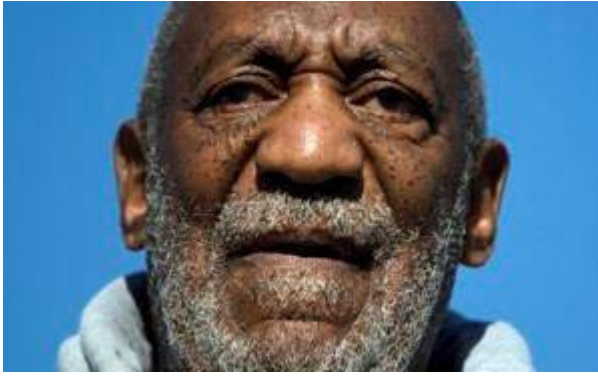
- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
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The Gospel of Rudy Giuliani

Why is no one talking about American-on-American crime?

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Nov 24, 2014



[The Cosby Show](#)

Declining to seriously reckon with the rape allegations against him is reckless. And I was once reckless.

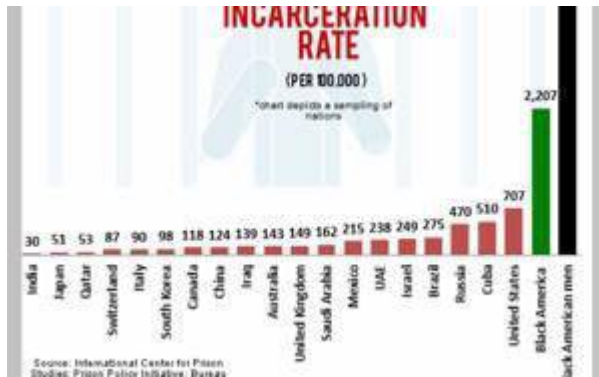
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[Charles Barkley and the Plague of 'Unintelligent' Blacks](#)

A history of respectability politics, from the postbellum period to today

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 28, 2014



Mapping the New Jim Crow

America's entire history is marked by the state imposing unfreedom on a large swath of the African American population.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 17, 2014



The Racist Housing Policies That Built Ferguson

The geography of America would be unrecognizable today without the race-based social engineering of the mid-20th century.

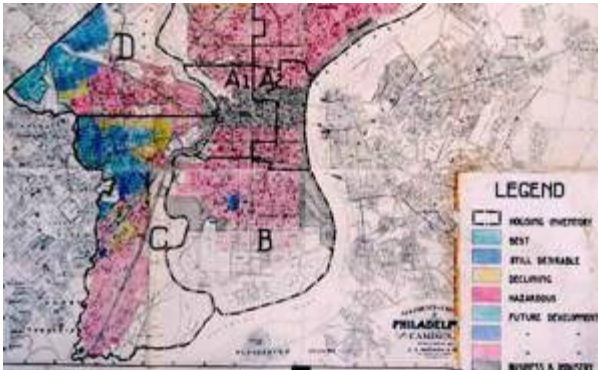
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[The Old Jim Crow](#)

Black people: America's premier outlaw class

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 15, 2014



[Books for the Horde: *The New Jim Crow*, Chapter 6](#)

Is the current prison system really intended as a way to control black people, or is something more nuanced at work?

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 10, 2014



To Raise, Love, and Lose a Black Child

Jordan Davis's mother, Lucia McBath, reflects on the guilty verdict in his murderer's trial.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 8, 2014



How to Steal Things, Exploit People, and Avoid All Responsibility

The case for reparations: a narrative bibliography

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 5, 2014



Continuing Education

It is one thing to understand someone whom you know and speak with regularly. It's still another to understand a stranger.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 3, 2014



Book for the Horde: *The New Jim Crow*, Chapters 4 and 5

What does it mean to be a black woman and consider tying yourself to a black man living in contemporary America?

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Oct 1, 2014



Books for the Horde: *The New Jim Crow*, Chapters 2 and 3

How the powers afforded to law enforcement encourage racism and plunder

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Sep 24, 2014



No, Hope Solo Is Not "Like" Ray Rice

To say the female soccer star accused of assault is the same as the football player who pummeled his fiancé erases the historical truth about domestic violence.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Sep 23, 2014



Books for the Horde: *The New Jim Crow*, Chapter One

Reading Michelle Alexander's volume on racism and mass incarceration

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
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Pro Football and Understanding the Sanctity of the Body

Nonchalance about injuries is magical thinking.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
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The Ray Rice Video Is Not a Revelation

The NFL already knew that he'd hit his wife. Only now did it become expedient for the league to suspend him.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Sep 8, 2014



The Next Tango With Paris

Joie de vivre and the case for the "hard student."

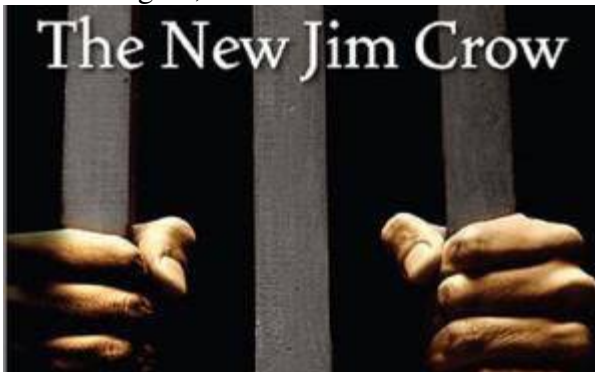
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Acting French

It's hard to learn a new language. But it's way harder to learn a new culture.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
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Books for the Horde: *The New Jim Crow* Reading Group

A collective study of Michelle Alexander's book on the contemporary system of mass incarceration

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Aug 26, 2014



Michael Brown's Unremarkable Humanity

On Monday, *The New York Times* published a profile of the dead St. Louis teenager, calling him "no angel"—part of a dubious language of "morality" about black men.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Aug 25, 2014



The Case For Reparations: The TL;DR Version

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Aug 23, 2014



Reparations for Ferguson

Total police control over black bodies has echoes in American history.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- Aug 18, 2014



Black People Are Not Ignoring 'Black on Black' Crime

The politics of changing the subject

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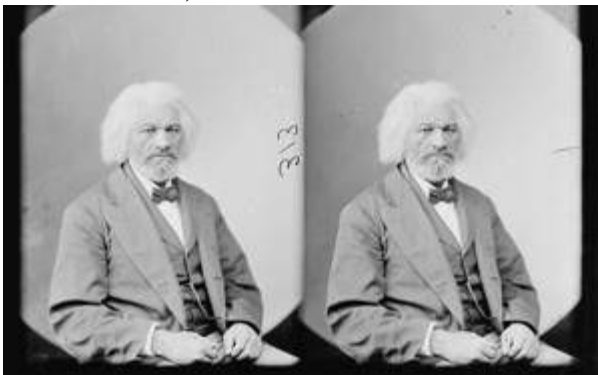


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Home Is Where the Hatred Is

The case for reparations: a narrative bibliography

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Slavery Made America

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[A Last Tango With Paris](#)

Why I'm spending the summer speaking nothing but French

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Martin Luther King Makes the Case for Reparations

A rare clip of the famed civil-rights leader toward the end of his life

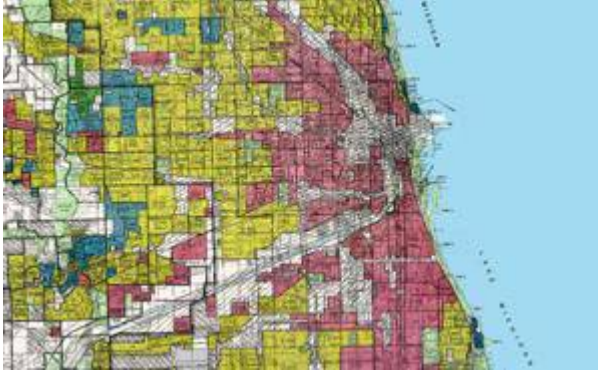
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The Radical Practicality of Reparations

A reply to David Frum

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
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[The Case for American History](#)

A reply to *National Review's* Kevin D. Williamson

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
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[On Whose Shoulders the Research Stands](#)

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- May 23, 2014



[The Case for Reparations: An Intellectual Autopsy](#)

Four years ago, I opposed reparations. Here's the story of how my thinking has evolved since then.

- [Ta-Nehisi Coates](#)
- May 22, 2014