

Das absolut wahre Tagebuch eines Teilzeitindianer

## AB 5a Biografie Sherman Alexie



Sherman J. Alexie, Jr., was born in October 1966. A Spokane/Coeur d'Alene Indian, he grew up on the Spokane Indian Reservation in Wellpinit, WA, about 50 miles northwest of Spokane, WA.

Born hydrocephalic, which means with water on the brain, Alexie underwent a brain operation at the age of 6 months and was not expected to survive. When he did beat the odds, doctors predicted he would live with severe mental retardation. Though he showed no signs of this, he suffered severe side effects, such as seizures, throughout his childhood. In spite of all he had to overcome, Alexie learned to read by age three, and devoured novels, such as John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath*, by age five. All these things ostracized him from his peers, though, and he was often the brunt of other kids' jokes on the reservation.

As a teenager, after finding his mother's name written in a textbook assigned to him at the Wellpinit school, Alexie made a conscious decision to attend high school off the reservation in Reardan, WA, about 20 miles south of Wellpinit, where he knew he would get a better education. At Reardan High he was the only Indian, except for the school mascot. There he excelled academically and became a star player on the basketball team. This experience inspired his first young adult novel, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian*.

In 1985 Alexie graduated Reardan High and went on to attend Gonzaga University in Spokane, WA, on scholarship. After two years at Gonzaga, he transferred to Washington State University (WSU) in Pullman, WA.

Alexie planned to be a doctor and enrolled in pre-med courses at WSU, but after fainting numerous times in human anatomy class realized he needed to change his career path. That change was fueled when he stumbled into a poetry workshop at WSU.

One year after he left WSU, his first two poetry collections, *The Business of Fancydancing* and *I Would Steal Horses*, were published.

Alexie had a problem with alcohol that began soon after he started college at Gonzaga, but after learning that Hanging Loose Press agreed to publish *The Business of Fancydancing*, he immediately gave up drinking at the age of 23 and has been sober ever since.

Alexie was named one of Granta's Best of Young American Novelists and won the Before Columbus Foundation's American Book Award and the Murray Morgan Prize for his first novel, *Reservation Blues*, published in 1995. His second novel, *Indian Killer*, published in 1996 was named one of People's Best of Pages and a New York Times Notable Book.

Alexie won a lot of awards for several books, novels and poetry. *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-time Indian* is his first book for young people. For this book he received 2007 the National Book Award and 2008 the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award.

Alexie lives in Seattle, WA, with his wife and two sons.

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