

## I Am America (And So Can You!)

By Stephen Colbert

### INTRODUCTION

I AM NO FAN OF BOOKS. AND CHANCES ARE, IF YOU'RE READING THIS, YOU AND I SHARE A HEALTHY SKEPTICISM ABOUT THE PRINTED WORD. WELL, I WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT THIS IS THE FIRST BOOK I'VE EVER WRITTEN, AND I HOPE IT'S THE FIRST BOOK YOU'VE EVER READ. DON'T MAKE A HABIT OF IT.

How many American Flags can you find in this paragraph?

Now, you might ask yourself, if by yourself you mean me, "Stephen, if you don't like books, why did you write one?" You just asked yourself a trick question. I didn't write it. I dictated it. I shouted it into a tape recorder over the Columbus Day weekend, then handed it to my agent and said, "Sell this." He's the one who turned it into a book. It's his funeral.

But I get your "drift." Why even dictate?

Well, like a lot of other dictators, there is one man's opinion I value above all others. Mine. And folks, I have a lot of opinions. I'm like Lucy trying to keep up with the candy at the chocolate factory. I can barely put them in my mouth fast enough.

In fact, I have so many opinions, I have overwhelmed my ability to document myself. I thought my nightly broadcast, *The Colbert Report* (check your local listings), would pick up some of the slack. But here's the dirty little secret. When the cameras go off, I'm still talking. And right now all that opinion is going to waste, like seed on barren ground. Well no more. It's time to impregnate this country with my mind.

Sorry margin-huggers, but I've got some opinions over here, too. Deal with it.<sup>1</sup>

See, at one time America was pure. Men were men, women were women, and gays were "confirmed bachelors." But somewhere around the late 60's, it became "groovy" to "let it all hang out" while you "kept on truckin'" stopping only to "give a hoot." And today, Lady Liberty is under attack from the cable channels, the internet blogs, and the Hollywood celebritocracy, out there spewing "facts" like so many locusts descending on America's crop of ripe, tender values. And as any farmer or biblical scholar will tell you, locusts are damn hard to get rid of.<sup>2</sup>

You will need your confirmation number to log in

I said on the very first episode of *The Colbert Report* that, together, I was going to change the world, and I've kept up my end of the bargain. But it's not changing fast enough. Last time I checked my supermarket still sold yogurt. From France! See a pattern? Turns out, it takes more than thirty minutes a night to fix everything that's destroying America, and that's where this book comes in. It's not just some collection of reasoned arguments supported by facts. That's the coward's way out.

Half an hour not enough

This book is Truth. My Truth.

I deliver my Truth hot and hard. Fast and Furious. So either accept it without hesitation or get out of the way, because somebody might get hurt, and it's not going to be me.

It's going to be you

Think you can handle it?

*I'm scared of Koreans.*

Bam! That's me off the cuff. Blunt and in your face. No editing. I think it. I say it. You read it. Sometimes I don't even think it, I just say it.

*Baby carrots are trying to turn me gay.*

Don't put this book down

See? I'm not pulling any punches. I'm telling it like it is. Get used to it or put this book down. Because this book is for America's Heroes. And who are the Heroes? The people who bought this book. That bears repeating. People who borrow this book are not Heroes. They are no better than welfare queens mooching off the system like card-carrying library card-carriers. For the record, we're not offering this book to libraries. No free rides.

Rides cost money

Okay, now it's *my* turn to ask a question: What do I want from you? Good question.

## Thank you

Just because I haven't put a lot of thought into this book doesn't mean you shouldn't. I want you to read this book carefully. Savor my ideas. Memorize pertinent passages. Eat with it, sleep with it, let nature take its course.

Because what I have dictated is nothing less than a Constitution for the Colbert Nation. And, like our Founding Fathers, I hold my Truths to be self-evident, which is why I did absolutely no research.

I didn't need to. The only research I needed was a long hard look in the mirror. For this book is My Story and, as such, it is the American Story.

## Minus the Fruited Plains. (See Chapter 7-Homosexuals)

I am reminded of the words of Walt Whitman, the nineteenth-century poet, naturalist, and all around man's man, who, through his epic lyricism, defined the character of this new nation. He said,

"I celebrate myself, and sing myself, And what I assume, you shall assume."

That "I" he was talking about? It's me.

**Bottom line:** Read this book. Be me.

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1. Yep, down here too.
2. I'm going to take a second here to praise the work of Monsanto. Good people. Doing a fine job protecting our nation's food supplies with their insect-resistant Frankenstein corn. They don't coddle pests and I respect that.

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