

# Born a Crime by Trevor Noah (my notes)

## Chapter 1 Intro

- **Apartheid = apart hate.** You separate people into groups and make them hate one another so that you can run them all.

## Chapter 1

- **Zulu:** One of South Africa's tribes—culturally militaristic, warriors, etc.



- **Xhosa:** Another South African tribe—more thoughtful, philosophical, etc.



- **Inkatha Freedom Party:** A political party made up primarily of Zulus
- **ANC (African National Congress):** Another political party made up primarily of Xhosas.
- **Necklacing:** Put a tire around someone, douse him/her in petrol, and light them on fire
- **Sun'qhela:** Xhosa saying meaning, "don't undermine me," "don't underestimate me," or "just try me." This word ends all conversations/arguments.
- **Iwisi:** A large Zulu "war club"



## Chapter 2

- **Colored:** The term for people of mixed-race in South Africa under apartheid
- **Soweto:** A township/ghetto built by the South African government during apartheid for black people. It was built with only two roads in and out so that if there ever were an issue, the government could block the exits/entrances and quell the rebellion.



- **Impipis:** Anonymous snitches who would inform the apartheid police of race violations (mixed couples, children, etc.)

## Chapter 2 Intro

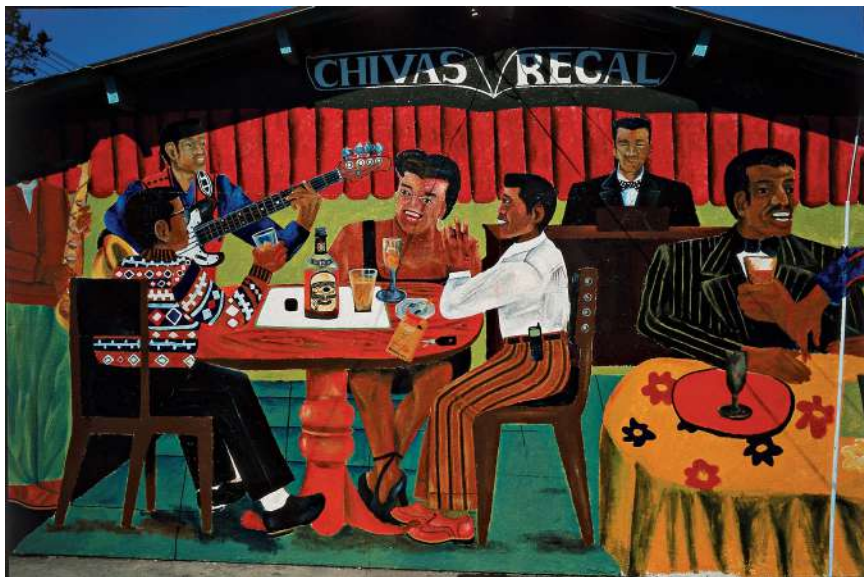
- **Sangoma:** A shaman or traditional healer

## Chapter 3

- **Spaza shop:** Informal grocery stores around Soweto. People would buy wholesale goods (bread and eggs, for example) and resell them piecemeal. People were too poor to buy large quantities of food. They would buy what they could afford—Two eggs, a few slices of bread, etc.



- **Shebeens:** Bars that people would run out of the back of their house in Soweto.



#### Chapter 4

- **Afrikaans:** An official language of South Africa, derived from the form of Dutch brought this area by Protestant settlers in the 17th century

#### Chapter 5

- **The black tax:** Because the generations who came before you have been pillaged, rather than being free to use your education and skills to move forward, you lose everything just trying to bring everyone behind you back to zero.
- **“Learn from your past and be better because of your past, but don’t cry about your past. Life is full of pain. Let the pain sharpen you, but don’t be bitter because of it.”** —Trevor Noah’s mom
- **“We tell people to follow their dreams, but you can only dream of what you can imagine, and depending on where you come from, your imagination can be quite limited.”** —Trevor Noah

#### Chapter 6 Intro

- In apartheid, Chinese people were classified as “black,” but Japanese people as “white.”

#### Chapter 7 Intro

- The story of the security guard at an Orlando Pirates soccer game catching and killing the black cat who had run onto the field during the game because he figured that it was a witch is remarkable. I can't find a video online anywhere, though.
- **Sjambok:** A hard leather whip



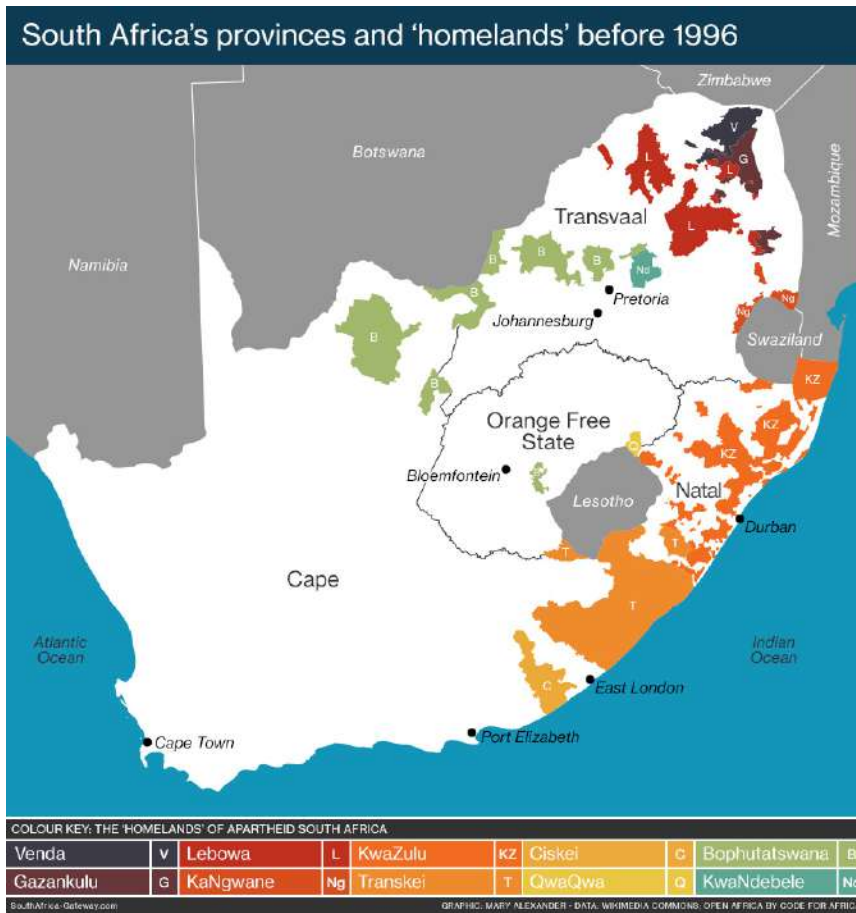
### Chapter 9 Intro

- **Khoisan:** Indigenous people of South Africa who lived as nomadic hunter-gatherers and cease to exist anymore due to two reasons: 1) Elimination through war, murder, famine, and disease, and 2) mixing with all the other people who came to inhabit South Africa: Dutch colonists and slaves from other territories of the Dutch Empire in West Africa, East Indies, Madagascar, etc. Many "colored people," the South African term for mixed race, may have Khoisan blood in them, but the culture is lost.



### Chapter 11

- **Homelands:** Places/neighborhoods designated for black people during apartheid



#### Chapter 13 Intro

- **Highlands North:** The suburb of Johannesburg where Trevor's family moved after his step-father's garage went out of business. It was a largely Jewish neighborhood.



#### Chapter 14 Intro

- South Africa has 11 official languages.

## Chapter 14

- **Matric dance:** “Prom” in South Africa
- **Pedi:** A tribe in South Africa to which Trevor’s matric dance date belonged



- **Amabhujua:** Someone who is very poor but tries to act like they are not (by buying fancy clothing, etc.)

## Chapter 15

- **Alexandra (Alex):** A tiny shantytown in Johannesburg. It is one of the poorest areas in all of South Africa.



- **Gomorra:** A biblical city destroyed by God for its wickedness (along with another city called Sodom). It is the nickname of Alexandra.
- Patricia Nombuyiselo Noah = English name + traditional name + last name (typical for black people in South Africa after apartheid)
- Trevor had a friend named Hitler. Apparently, a name like this, as well as Mussolini and Napoleon, weren’t uncommon. Many black South Africans didn’t learn and understand European history the way that we in the West have, so these names were simply seen as European/white names that carried a tone of toughness or power that black parents could give their child according to the “formula” mentioned above in the apartheid society.

## Chapter 16

- **Kota:** A quarter loaf of bread with the inside scraped out and filled with various items, at its base, fried potatoes, a slice of baloney, and a pickled mango relish called “achar,” but you can add various upgrades, such as hot dog, sausage, fried egg, cheese, etc.



- **Achar:** Pickled mango relish



- **Cheese Boy:** A township name for a boy with money. Cheese was expensive in South Africa. If you had it, or could afford to add it to your food order, it meant that you had money. In a township, you weren't really “hood.”
- **Vetkoek:** Fried dough

#### Chapter 17

- **Clapping your wrists together** = Shorthand on the corner for getting arrested.

#### Chapter 18

- **Tsonga:** The tribe of Abel, Trevor's step-father. Their culture emphasizes very strict, traditional gender roles.



- **Gazankulu:** The Tsonga homeland under apartheid
- **Marogo:** A kind of wild Spinach cooked with caterpillars

