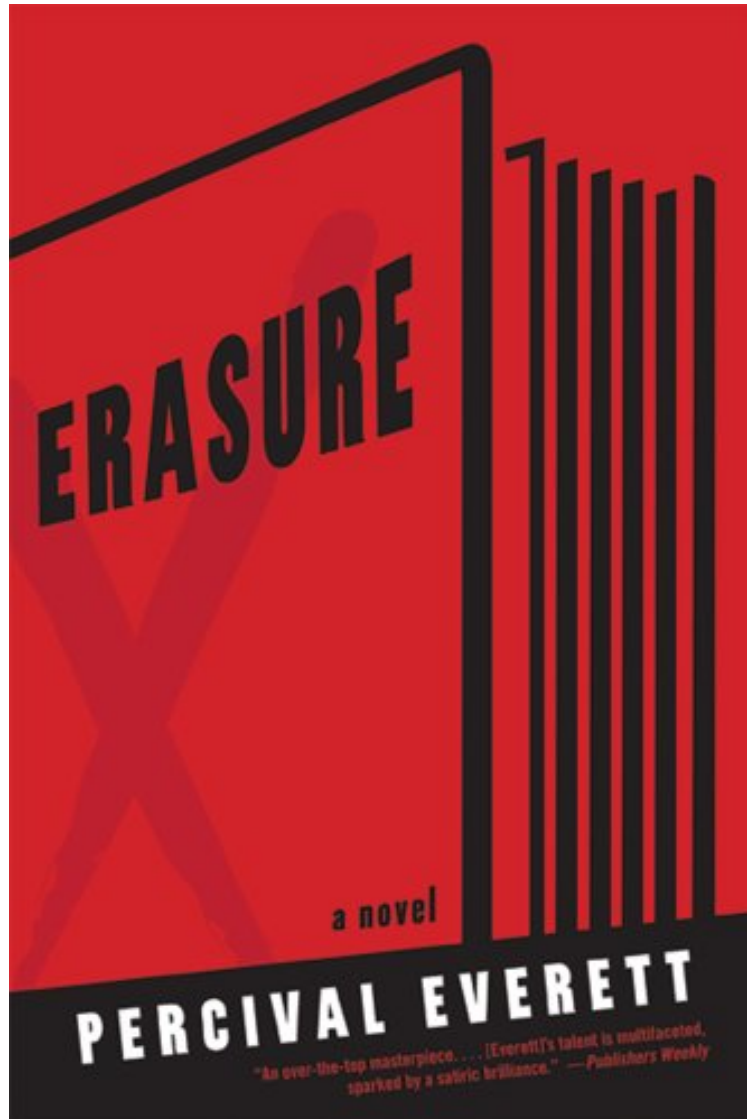


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Erasure: A Novel

Percival Everett

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Percival Everett : Erasure: A Novel before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Erasure: A Novel:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great social commentary and funny asBy EricThis guy needs to turn his books into movies. Great social commentary and funny as hell1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Casondra BIf I had to describe this book in one word it would be "intense".0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. AmazingBy Shaun Alexander FrancoRead alongside Ellison, Hurston, and Wright for a graduate course in the aesthetics of minority literature, this work provides a raucous take on its central question: what

defines the work of the black (or brown, or yellow, or red) artist? Merit? Authenticity? Normativity? Innovation? Read it.

Percival Everett's blistering satire about race and writing, available again in paperback
Thelonius "Monk" Ellison's writing career has bottomed out: his latest manuscript has been rejected by seventeen publishers, which stings all the more because his previous novels have been "critically acclaimed." He seethes on the sidelines of the literary establishment as he watches the meteoric success of *We's Lives in Da Ghetto*, a first novel by a woman who once visited "some relatives in Harlem for a couple of days." Meanwhile, Monk struggles with real family tragedies: his aged mother is fast succumbing to Alzheimer's, and he still grapples with the reverberations of his father's suicide seven years before. In his rage and despair, Monk dashes off a novel meant to be an indictment of Juanita Mae Jenkins's bestseller. He doesn't intend for *My Pafology* to be published, let alone taken seriously, but it is: under the pseudonym Stagg R. Leigh, and soon it becomes the Next Big Thing. How Monk deals with the personal and professional fallout galvanizes this audacious, hysterical, and quietly devastating novel.

From Publishers Weekly
Everett's (*Glyph*; *Frenzy*; etc.) latest is an over-the-top masterpiece about an African-American writer who "overcomes" his intellectual tendency to "write white" and ends up penning a parody of ghetto fiction that becomes a huge commercial and literary success. Thelonius "Monk" Ellison is an erudite, accomplished but seldom-read author who insists on writing obscure literary papers rather than the so-called "ghetto prose" that would make him a commercial success. He finally succumbs to temptation after seeing the Oberlin-educated author of *We's Lives in da Ghetto* during her appearance on a talk show, firing back with a parody called *My Pafology*, which he submits to his startled agent under the gangsta pseudonym of Stagg R. Leigh. Ellison quickly finds himself with a six-figure advance from a major house, a multimillion-dollar offer for the movie rights and a monster bestseller on his hands. The money helps with a family crisis, allowing Ellison to care for his widowed mother as she drifts into the fog of Alzheimer's, but it doesn't ease the pain after his sister, a physician, is shot by right-wing fanatics for performing abortions. The dark side of wealth surfaces when both the movie mogul and talk-show host demand to meet the nonexistent Leigh, forcing Ellison to don a disguise and invent a sullen, enigmatic character to meet the demands of the market. The final indignity occurs when Ellison becomes a judge for a major book award and *My Pafology* (title changed to *Fuck*) gets nominated, forcing the author to come to terms with his perverse literary joke. Percival's talent is multifaceted, sparked by a satiric brilliance that could place him alongside Wright and Ellison as he skewers the conventions of racial and political correctness. (Sept. 21)
Forecast: Everett has been well-reviewed before, but his latest far surpasses his previous efforts. Passionate word of mouth (of which there should be plenty), rave reviews (ditto) and the startling cover (a young, smiling black boy holding a toy gun to his head) could help turn this into a genuine publishing event.
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From Booklist
Thelonius "Monk" Ellison, author of experimental novels, is somewhat estranged from his family because he was favored by an emotionally distant, recently deceased father. When his sister is killed, Monk returns to Washington, D.C., to care for his mother, who is in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease. At the same time that he deals with family crises, Monk is also in the midst of a professional crisis after the seventh rejection of his most recent novel. In a fury over the success of *We's Lives in Da Ghetto*, a debut novel by a black woman exploiting racial stereotypes, Monk writes his own ultra ghetto novel. It is a parody, reminiscent of *Native Son* but with none of the pathos and perspective. Monk's main character is an Ebonics-spouting brute with no regard for his four children or their respective mothers. To his chagrin, the novel is a success, and Monk is left to struggle with artistic ethics versus the comforts of wealth. A scathingly funny look at racism and the book business: editors, publishers, readers, and writers alike. Vanessa Bush
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"Erasure is as watertight and hilarious a satire as, say, [Evelyn Waugh's] *Scoop* . . . [Everett] is a first-rate word wrangler." ?Nicholas Lezard, *The Guardian*
"With equal measures of sympathy and satire, [Erasure] craftily addresses the highly charged issue of being 'black enough' in America." ?Jenifer Berman, *The New York Times Book*
"An over-the-top masterpiece. . . . Percival's talent is multifaceted, sparked by a satiric brilliance that could place him alongside Wright and Ellison as he skewers the conventions of racial and political correctness." ?Publishers Weekly
"A scathingly funny look at racism and the book business: editors, publishers, readers, and writers alike." ?Booklist
"More genuine and tender than much of Everett's previous work, but no less impressive intellectually: a high point in an already substantial literary career." ?Kirkus
"The sharp satire on American publishers and American readers that Everett puts forward is delicious, though it won't win him many friends among the sentimental educated class who want to read something serious about black inner-city life without disturbing any of their stereotypes." ?Chicago Tribune