



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OPRAH'S BOOK CLUB 2016 ANNOUNCES ITS NEW SELECTION:
"THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD" BY COLSON WHITEHEAD**



*Caption: Oprah Winfrey with author Colson Whitehead
Credit: O, The Oprah Magazine / Photographer: Rob Howard*

Los Angeles, CA and New York, NY – OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network and *O, The Oprah Magazine* announces the newest Oprah's Book Club 2016 selection, *The Underground Railroad* by Colson Whitehead (Doubleday). *The Underground Railroad* is on-sale today, Tuesday, August 2, 2016, at bookstores, online retailers and wherever books are sold. *The Underground Railroad* is also available on audio narrated by Bahni Turpin, as well as in large print.

In his sixth novel, Whitehead tells the harrowing story of Cora, an indomitable teenage slave and her desperate bid for freedom from an antebellum cotton plantation in Georgia circa 1850. *The Underground Railroad* is at once a kinetic adventure tale of one woman's ferocious will to escape the horrors of bondage and a shattering, powerful meditation on the history we all share.

The novel has earned starred pre-publication reviews from *Publisher's Weekly*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal* and *Booklist*. *Entertainment Weekly* and the *New York Times Book Review* have named *The Underground Railroad* as one of the most anticipated books of 2016.

Click here for a message from Oprah (link with embed code): oprah.com/bookclubvideo

"When I got the call, I let out a stream of loud, joyful expletives - which was awkward because my plane had just landed and everyone looked at me like I was crazy," says Whitehead. "Oprah has introduced so many wonderful books to people, from *The Song of Solomon* to *The Sound and The Fury*, that I'm honored and grateful that *The Underground Railroad* is joining such great company. You write the best book you can, and hope it finds its way. This is the best kind of sendoff."

The cross-platform book club selection kicks off with Oprah’s interview with Whitehead in the September issue of *O, The Oprah Magazine* (on sale August 9), in which he describes how and why he came up with the idea to make the Underground Railroad an actual train, complete with conductors, stations and tracks. Oprah.com will feature video clips of Oprah speaking with Colson Whitehead about the book. The Oprah Book Club page on Goodreads will encourage book discussion and sharing.

As readers complete their journey through *The Underground Railroad*, they can engage online at the Book Club hub (oprah.com/bookclub) and through a variety of digital and social media platforms. Oprah.com will feature a series of original interviews with Winfrey and Whitehead, a reading guide, and Winfrey’s favorite passages from the book.

Readers will also have the opportunity to participate in the book club and answer weekly questions via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. A stream of reader tweets (#OprahsBookClub), Facebook posts and Instagram photos from around the world will provide a snapshot of what participants are thinking, feeling and sharing as they read the book together. Whitehead will participate in a book club discussion Q&A on *O, The Oprah Magazine’s* Facebook page moderated by Leigh Haber, Books Editor, on Wednesday, August 24 at 3:00pm EST.

ABOUT THE BOOK: In *The Underground Railroad*, Whitehead introduces readers to Cora, a teenage slave on a cotton plantation in Georgia. Life is hell for all the slaves, but especially bad for Cora; an outcast even among her fellow Africans, she is coming into womanhood—where even greater pain awaits. When Caesar, a recent arrival from Virginia, tells her about the Underground Railroad, they decide to take a terrifying risk and escape. Matters do not go as planned—Cora kills a young white boy who tries to capture her. Though they manage to find a station and head north, they are being hunted by slave catchers.

In Whitehead’s ingenious conception, the Underground Railroad is no mere metaphor—engineers and conductors operate a secret network of tracks and cavernous tunnels, crisscrossing beneath American soil. As Cora travels north, her journey transports her across state lines. And along her way, each state he visits portrays a different “state” of American possibility, showcasing a kaleidoscope of communities across the country – from a white supremacist enclave in North Carolina to an Indiana black separatist encampment.

Drawing structural inspiration from *Gulliver’s Travels* and stylistic influence from *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Whitehead delivers an astonishing and monumental new novel, featuring a breathtaking and vividly-drawn protagonist and plot. Cora encounters different worlds at each stage of her journey—hers is an odyssey through time as well as space. Though its central conceit may be imagined and its narrative not strictly historical, the hideous realities of slavery and institutionalized racism at its center are well grounded in documented facts. As Whitehead brilliantly re-creates the unique terrors for black people in the pre–Civil War era, his narrative seamlessly weaves the saga of America from the brutal importation of Africans to the unfulfilled promises of the present day.

ABOUT COLSON WHITEHEAD: Colson Whitehead is the *New York Times* bestselling author of *The Noble Hustle*, *Zone One*, *Sag Harbor*, *The Intuitionist*, *John Henry Days*, *Apex Hides the Hurt*, and one collection

of essays, *The Colossus of New York*. A Pulitzer Prize finalist and a recipient of MacArthur and Guggenheim fellowships, he lives in New York City.

ABOUT OPRAH’S BOOK CLUB 2016:

In June 2012, Oprah Winfrey reintroduced her popular book club as an interactive, multi-platform reading club that harnesses the power of social media, bringing passionate readers together to discuss inspiring stories. After being selected as the club’s inaugural book, *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed (Knopf) returned to the top of the New York Times Best Sellers list and spent six consecutive weeks at #1. Other selections include *The Invention of Wings* by Sue Monk Kidd (Viking), *Ruby* by Cynthia Bond (Hogarth) and *The Twelve Tribes of Hattie* by Ayana Mathis (Knopf). *The Underground Railroad* is the club’s fifth selection.

ABOUT OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network:

OWN: Oprah Winfrey Network is the first and only network named for, and inspired by, a single iconic leader. Oprah Winfrey's heart and creative instincts inform the brand and the magnetism of the channel. Winfrey provides leadership in programming and attracts superstar talent to join her in primetime, building a global community of like-minded viewers and leading that community to connect on social media and beyond. OWN is a singular destination on cable. Depth with edge. Heart. Star power. Connection. And endless possibilities. OWN is a joint venture between Harpo, Inc. and Discovery Communications. The network debuted on January 1, 2011 and is available in 85 million homes. The venture also includes the award-winning digital platform Oprah.com. For more information, please visit www.oprah.com/own and <https://press.discovery.com/us/own/>.

ABOUT O, THE OPRAH MAGAZINE:

O, The Oprah Magazine (oprah.com/omagazine) encourages confident, intelligent women to reach for their dreams, express their individual style and make wise choices, guided by the values of one of the most charismatic women in the world, O Editorial Director Oprah Winfrey. With an emphasis on personal growth, the magazine inspires, addressing every aspect of a woman's life – the material, the intellectual and the emotional – and deeply connects with more than 15 million readers every month (MRI, 2011 Doublebase). From the moment it launched, O, The Oprah Magazine carved out a unique position in the marketplace and created an entirely new category in women’s magazines, delivering the Live Your Best Life message through thoughtful, ever-evolving content and the trusted advice from featured columnists including author Elizabeth Gilbert, financial advisor Farnoosh Torabi, Dr. Oz and more. In May 2012, O, The Oprah Magazine won the publishing industry’s highest honor, the American Society of Magazine Editors (ASME) award for General Excellence. O, The Oprah Magazine is available on Zinio, Barnes & Noble Nook, Amazon Kindle and Flipboard, and its namesake iPad app is available on the App store at www.itunes.com/appstore. Follow O, The Oprah Magazine on Twitter at @O_Magazine.

ABOUT DOUBLEDAY AND PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE:

Doubleday is an imprint of the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, which is a division of Penguin Random House, Inc. Their parent company is Bertelsmann AG, the international media company.

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