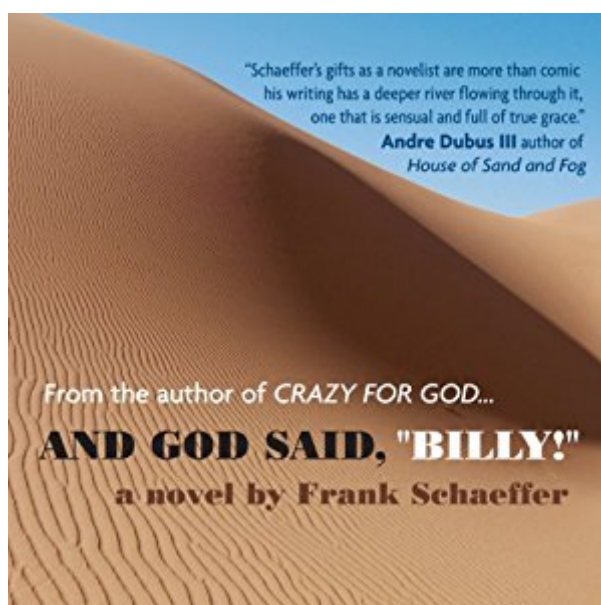


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# And God Said, Billy!: A Novel



## Synopsis

And God Said 'Billy!' is a darkly comic coming-of-age story written by the master story teller that House of Sand and Fog author Andre Dubus III hailed as the funniest American writer since Mark Twain. The story is set in the 1980s and is about Billy, a young fundamentalist Christian who feels called to go to Hollywood to make "God's movie." But everything goes off the rails when he accepts a job to direct a soft-porn slasher/exploitation film in apartheid-era South Africa. He makes this "It's a deal not a movie" picture even though he has to bust the US entertainment industry's anti-apartheid sanctions in hopes his "worldly movie" will be "used by God" as a "stepping stone" to making his own divinely sanctioned "End Times" picture. Billy loses his fundamentalist faith, his film career, his family and more.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

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Version: Unabridged

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Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

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## Customer Reviews

If you have not participated in fundamentalist, charismatic culture, a first impression of this book might be, "Is this really the way they think?" The author takes us into the thought life of his main character and some other folks from his subculture. Part of me laughs on most pages, while part winces with the knowledge that this isn't that far from the truth. Maybe that is why it is funny. With no excuses, the book, though fiction, portrays the hypocrisy, unstable logic, and absolute judgmental certainty of the most right of the religious right. Yes, really, this is what goes on in the thoughts of many caught up in this unusual culture. Frank Schaeffer has lived on both sides of the culture and is uniquely able to tell this story.

I am in total agreement with the reviews posted so far. Mr. Schaeffer's fiction is certainly laugh inducing. I no longer will read his fiction in public lest I be hauled away in a straight-jacket. However, this book has brought me to tears in places. Being a former evangelical, and the child of an evangelical professional, I was reminded of the pain I experienced when my dad was absent so often "serving The Lord." Even more painfully I was reminded of my own absences from my family when I was off "serving The Lord." I think for many of us former evangelicals Frank has been the best therapist ever; at 1/1000th of the cost. I cannot imagine how I would have learned to deal with some of my anger and disillusionment without Frank's thoughtful, laugh-tear inducing work. I really appreciate his heart-felt honesty and willingness to share what might possibly be painful to him as well.

Frank Schaeffer does a beautiful and humorous job of capturing the spirit of magical rationalization present in fundamentalist evangelical Christianity. At first it seems a little over the top and heavy handed until the reader realizes the tongue in cheek intent of the author. This is a real page turner and hauntingly realistic for anyone who comes from the charismatic Christian tradition. The sad thing is that, while this story seems fantastic, there are millions of well intentioned people walking around today who think exactly like "Billy," complete with the literalistic bible verse references. It's clear that the author comes from this tradition and he does an exceptional job of recreating it in all its magnificent irrationality. I especially recommend it for those who have escaped this world of magical thinking!

Mr. Schaeffer thoughtfully provided me with an advance review copy of his book. I am so glad he did. I love this book. It ranks as highly with me as does *A Confederacy of Dunces* by John Kennedy Toole. That is, it is brilliant, insightful, humorous, spot on, and worth reading a few times--each time to savor it a bit more. (And as with *ACoD*, this book, too, is deserving of a Pulitzer Prize, so there.) I know I should provide you with a precis, critique, or even a reader's summary. I will not. Read the book. Read it. Buy it and read it. Right now. Yes, you. I grew out of the culture satirized here. Perhaps you did, too. But, if so, or not so, my advice is: Buy the book. Read the book. Laugh and cry until you can do neither and then continue on. Thank me later for my strong encouragement and thank Mr. Schaeffer for writing it and strongly encourage him to write more novels.

With a nod to full disclosure, I received a free copy of Schaeffer's latest work for review. Now that

I've read it, I'll be buying & paying for some copies as gifts. I rarely read in contemporary fiction tones so familiar to my Calvinist doctrinal studies. And even less frequently have I encountered a voice positioned between the extremes of exclusionary Abrahamic fundamentalism & absolute atheism. Finding both in Frank Schaeffer's AND GOD SAID, "BILLY" was a treat. During this read I had several laugh-out-loud moments as well as pensive, put-down-the-book pauses to consider profound concepts. There was a patch where I considered not finishing BILLY. I mention it now only to advise fellow readers to push through if you find yourself in a similar spot. To have missed this completed gem would have been my great misfortune. Schaeffer has brilliant perspectives and he communicates them well. I'm already looking forward to his next offering.

Wow! Frank Schaeffer has written a book that follows the ideological contradictions of the religious right AND is an entertaining read. How do you do that? Well, I would think his understanding of religious fundamentalism from the inside out gives him a unique vantage point. I love Frank's writing, and look forward to a lot more of it. If you haven't read one of Frank's earlier books, this is a great entry point. You'll want to go back and catch up on the rest when you're done. It's funny, irreverent and insightful. Even, dare I say, spiritual? Do yourself a favor, get the book.

Frank's new novel was a fantastic read. When I first started reading the book I thought that it was over the top with Biblical references and verses, then I realized the "tounge in cheek" theme. Once I got over that I couldn't put it down. It is a such a great story. I was shocked at some of the things that "Billy" had done and laughed out loud at some of the hypocrisy and it's direct relationship to the faith driven world. It really drove home some of my faith journey and the stupid/not-so-stupid things I'd done "for God" in past. So much so that I couldn't help but chuckle numerous times (much to my daughter's amusement). This book is not shy in sharing the raw story and "telling it like it is." It's real, immersive, factual and has a personality like no novel I've ever read. I can't help but imagine the real "Billy" and by the end of the story my heart went out for this guy. If I met this guy I'd want to help him somehow. I'm sure that the hints of truth that peek out of this novel are what make it so compelling. Thoroughly enjoyed.

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