

TIME



THE TIME 100

The World's Most Influential People

Michelle Obama *by Oprah Winfrey*
Rush Limbaugh *by Glenn Beck*
George Clooney *by Bono*
Plus 97 More



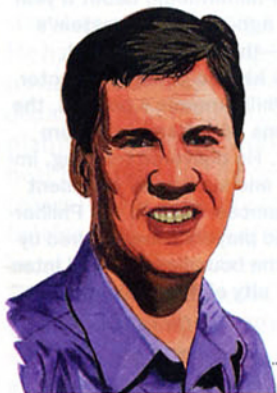
Author

Jeff Kinney

By Forrest Simpson

"YESSSS!" yelled my younger brother when I brought home the latest *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* book by Jeff Kinney, 38. When a new *Diary* comes out, you see kids reading it everywhere. At my school, there's always lively chatter about the latest troubles of Greg Heffley, the main character. Even my friends who say they hate to read can be heard recalling hilarious scenes. Each book resembles a real diary, with text and cartoons that look hand-drawn by a sixth-grader. We love these books because of Kinney's ability to vividly describe the life and problems of an average middle-schooler, with pictures and language that capture our sense of humor and perspective.

SIMPSON is a sixth-grader at Riverdale Country School in the Bronx, N.Y., and a TIME FOR KIDS reporter



In Germany, *Diary's* title is translated as *Greg's Journal: I'm Surrounded by Idiots!*



TV Host

Tavis Smiley

By Charlie Rose

TAVIS! HE HAS ONE OF THOSE NAMES THAT STAND ALONE. Think Oprah, Tiger, Elvis and, yes, Barack. You know if you hear Tavis, you are talking about Mr. Smiley.

Tavis, 44, and I sit next to each other in the late-night-television galaxy, on the same network, one of us starting and the other finishing the night. We do it differently, but we seek the same goal: great stories and great storytellers. It doesn't matter if they come from science or sports, entertainment or education, poetry or politics. It's about what they have learned, what they value and what they teach us about being human.

Tavis has to go no further than his life to find a good story. It is a story of rising out of poverty with a purpose, of hearing the music of a dream, his hopes to be not just a broadcaster or a businessman but also a leader, a builder.

He has created an empire of his own with the Smiley Group. Tavis doesn't just write books; he publishes books. He doesn't just have an office; he owns an office building. But he wants more than the rewards of financial success, although he has pursued it with uncommon skills. He reaches for leadership. He has a passion to educate about the black experience, black history, black responsibility, black achievement and black people.

Tavis rejects arguments that we are in a postracial era, because he looks at race and sees an unfinished agenda. And in fact, he has taken on the responsibility of holding President Obama accountable on race. In the end, it is not just about Tavis, not just about African Americans, not just about President Obama. It is about an unfinished American agenda that serves us all to complete and to make us one people.

ROSE is editor and anchor of Charlie Rose