

Author Biography: Abdi Nor Iftin

As a child in war-torn Mogadishu, Abdi Nor Iftin learned English by watching action movies. When U.S. Marines landed to take on the warlords, Abdi cheered the arrival of these real-life American action heroes. Sporting hip-hop clothes and dance moves, he became known as “Abdi American.” But when radical Islamists took control in 2006, it became dangerous to celebrate Western culture. Instead, Abdi risked his life posting secret dispatches to NPR. As life in Somalia grew more dangerous, he fled to Kenya. In an amazing stroke of luck, he won entrance to the U.S. in the annual visa lottery, though his route to America—ending in a harrowing sequence of events that nearly stranded him in Nairobi—did not come easily. Now he is a proud resident of Maine, a Tedx Amoskeag 2019 speaker and he is working on a documentary about his story.

Since the book was published:

- He became an American citizen in Portland, Maine, on January 17, 2020.
- He is majoring in political science at Boston College – Woods College of Advancing Studies.
- His brother Hassan lives in Toronto with his wife and three children.
- Abdi still battles PTSD.
- A Somali-language version of the book was published recently.
- Abdi loves the outdoors, and his Instagram account is full of photos of him horseback riding, canoeing, bicycling, hiking and skiing.
- *Call Me American* has been selected for several first year (college) reads and community reads, so he participates in lots of book talks, author panels and panels on immigration.