

Which titles made Barack Obama's summer reading list

By Christi Carras

Los Angeles Times

Would it really be summer without Barack Obama's summer reading list?

The former president has released his 2022 picks for the summer season.

"I've read a couple of great books this year and wanted to share some of my favorites so far," Obama wrote on Instagram. "What have you been reading this summer?"

Among the titles on Obama's summer reading list is Silvia Moreno-Garcia's "Velvet Was the Night," a noir set in 1970s Mexico City that was nominated for the 2021 Los Angeles Times Book Prize in the mystery-thriller category. Earlier this month, Moreno-Garcia spoke with the L.A. Times about her ability to write across various genres, from fantasy and mystery to horror and science fiction.

"What I'm asking readers is to follow me into the forest," Moreno-Garcia told the L.A. Times. "You won't get lost, hold my hand, and I'll tell you a story."

On Tuesday, Moreno-Garcia shared Obama's reading list on Twitter and gave a shoutout to her "friend and fellow crime writer" S.A. Cosby, whose novel about two formerly incarcerated men seeking to avenge their sons' deaths, "Razorblade Tears," also made the cut.

"I can't speak...there are no words," Cosby tweeted on Tuesday. "I'm crying



Chris Sweda/Chicago Tribune/TNS

Former President Barack Obama gestures during a conference at the University of Chicago on April 6, 2022, in Chicago.

right now, not Razorblade Tears but Tears of joy All Things Are Possible!!!"

Also "insanely happy" to be on Obama's literary radar was Jennifer Egan, whose novel "The Candy House," a belated sequel to her Pulitzer Prize-winning "A Visit from the Good Squad," centers on a tech mogul who invents a way to access a person's entire memory.

Another noted author, Emily St. John

OBAMA'S SUMMER READING LIST

"Sea of Tranquility" by Emily St. John Mandel

"Why We're Polarized" by Ezra Klein

"The Candy House" by Jennifer Egan

"A Little Devil in America: In Praise of Black Performance" by Hanif Abdurraqib

"To Paradise" by Hanya Yanagihara

"Silverview" by John le Carre

"Black Cake" by Charmaine Wilkerson

"The Family Chao" by Lan Samantha Chang

"Velvet Was the Night" by Silvia

Moreno-Garcia

"Mouth to Mouth" by Antoine Wilson

"The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure" by Yascha Mounk

"The School for Good Mothers" by Jessamine Chan

"Razorblade Tears" by S.A. Cosby

"Blood in the Garden: The Flagrant History of the 1990s New York Knicks" by Chris Herring

Mandel, has been having a good year. In addition to Obama's pick, the bestselling "Sea of Tranquility," Mandel has seen the new novel's prequel-of-sorts, "Station Eleven," soak up high praise and popular adulation as an HBO Max miniseries nom-

inated for seven Emmys.

Other writers who reacted excitedly Tuesday to Obama's list include Jessamine Chan, author of "The School for Good Mothers."

"The very best surprise," she wrote on Instagram. "Thank you to my fellow Chicagoan and birthday twin @barackobama for this early present. I want to write something coherent here, but I haven't had enough caffeine yet, and I'm just happily losing my mind. What incredible company!"

Another notable novel on Obama's list: "Silverview," the final work by legendary spy novelist John le Carre, who died in December 2020 at age 89.

Yascha Mounk, author of "The Great Experiment: Why Diverse Democracies Fall Apart and How They Can Endure," also shared his enthusiasm. "Barack Obama is the American politician I most admire," Mounk tweeted. "I'm ... giddy with excitement to learn that he has read and enjoyed The Great Experiment (and decided to include it in his summer reading list)! Rarely at a loss for words but..."

Obama listed one more work of political nonfiction, Ezra Klein's "Why We're Polarized." Both selections reflected the former president's centrist-leaning, coalition-building brand of liberalism — rounding out a list that seems to run, at least among the bookish, solidly down the middle.

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