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## PHILIP ROTH

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For immediate release

### As he celebrates his 80<sup>th</sup> birthday on 19 March 2013, renowned American writer Philip Roth shares with Web of Stories intimate and enthralling details of his life and work.

Born in America in 1933, Roth is one of the world's most prolific writers, best known for his 1969 novel *Portnoy's Complaint* and for his late-1990s trilogy comprising the Pulitzer Prize-winning *American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1998) and *The Human Stain* (2000). He has been one of the most honoured authors of his generation, receiving many prestigious literary awards, including the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1997 and the Man Booker International Prize in 2011.

In this series of newly-released clips, Roth provides a fascinating insight into his life, including his ongoing passion for literature: *'I had a very vigorous literary education. I read a helluva lot in college... and graduate school. My reading really began again post-university, when I began teaching. I educated myself, through teaching, teaching novels, and I read every major writer and taught books by every major writer.'*

He recounts the conversation with his parents just before *Portnoy's Complaint* was published, where he warned them of what was to come: *'I have a book coming out... and it's going to be a big sensation... because there's a lot of obscenity in it, and it's about a Jewish family... You are not the parents in this book, it's not about us... You're going to get calls, maybe even visits, from journalists... TV people... magazine people.'* He also reveals his

mother's reaction to the conversation: *'She got into the taxi cab and began to cry... [she said] "He has delusions of grandeur. I can't bear to think about how disappointed he's going to be."*

He discusses their reaction to the book, revealing how his father offered signed copies of the book to friends, autographing them himself: *'From Philip Roth's father, Herman: "I don't know what suffering they suffered, they may well have been hurt by things in the book, but they weren't like that [the characters]... but they never were aggrieved as a result.'*

Roth also confides his thoughts on death: *'It stuns me. I'm familiar with it, as I wasn't say... 25 years ago... Of a family of four, I'm the last one standing... I know they're gone. I've known it for some time now. It's still stunning. And numerous of my friends have died... I'm shocked and stunned.'*

This insightful, never-before-seen footage of Roth, alongside his existing recordings, can be watched as a number of short clips, with a fully searchable transcript. All Web of Stories videos are easy to share with friends and colleagues, and may be embedded into personal blogs and websites.

Find out more:  
<http://www.webofstories.com/play/53210>

## NOTES FOR EDITORS ABOUT WEB OF STORIES

Everyone has a story to tell. Over time many stories become forgotten, but now Web of Stories offers members of the public the chance to tell their stories for future generations to enjoy. The project is built on the belief that we all have wonderful stories to share, and have family and friends whose tales we would like to hear.

Web of Stories began as an archive of life stories told by some of the great scientists, writers and artists of our time. As the number of stories grew, it became obvious that some were on related topics and that a web was slowly being created of connected stories.

We welcome anyone to come and talk about virtually anything they like. Just like our famous speakers, we hope you will record your stories for others to enjoy.

## CONTACT

For more information on Web of Stories or any of our videos please contact the Press Desk on +44(0)20 7323 0323 or [press@webofstories.com](mailto:press@webofstories.com)

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