

Norman Mailer Quotes

*Men, Writing, People, Thinking, War, Book, Believe, Literature, Sex, Mean,
Country, America, Two, Years, Night, Democracy, Real, Mind, Children, Artist*

Writing books is the closest men ever come to childbearing.

~Norman Mailer

A modern democracy is a tyranny whose borders are undefined; one discovers how far one can go only by traveling in a straight line until one is stopped.

~Norman Mailer

The function of socialism is to raise suffering to a higher level.

~Norman Mailer

Khomeini has offered us the opportunity to regain our frail religion ... faith in the power of words.

~Norman Mailer

There was that law of life, so cruel and so just, that one must grow or else pay more for remaining the same.

~Norman Mailer

I've made an ass of myself so many times I often wonder if I am one.

~Norman Mailer

Any war that requires the suspension of reason as a necessity for support is a bad war.

~Norman Mailer

America is a hurricane, and the only people who do not hear the sound are those fortunate if incredibly stupid and smug White Protestants who live in the center, in the serene eye of the big wind.

~Norman Mailer

I was thinking that surgeons had to be the happiest people on earth. To cut people up and get paid for it-that's happiness, I told myself.

~Norman Mailer

Love asks us that we be a little braver than is comfortable, a little more generous, a little more flexible. It means living on the edge more than we care to.

~Norman Mailer

With the pride of the artist, you must blow against the walls of every power that exists the small trumpet of your defiance.

~Norman Mailer

Reaching consensus in a group is often confused with finding the right answer.

~Norman Mailer

I'm hostile to men, I'm hostile to women, I'm hostile to cats, to poor cockroaches, I'm afraid of horses.

~Norman Mailer

Bright was the light of my last martini on my moral horizon

~Norman Mailer

In America few people will trust you unless you are irreverent.

~Norman Mailer

There is no greater impotence in all the world like knowing you are right and that the wave of the world is wrong, yet the wave crashes upon you.

~Norman Mailer

Sentimentality is the emotional promiscuity of those who have no sentiment.

~Norman Mailer

A really good style comes only when a man has become as good as he can be. Style is character. A good style cannot come from a bad

undisciplined character.

~Norman Mailer

Harsh words live in the dungeon of the heart

~Norman Mailer

We love those who can lead us to a place we will never reach without them.

~Norman Mailer

The highest prize in a world of men is the most beautiful woman available on your arm and living there in her heart loyal to you.

~Norman Mailer

There are four stages to marriage. First there's the affair, then there's the marriage, then children, and finally the fourth stage, without which you cannot know a woman, the divorce.

~Norman Mailer

Obsession is the single most wasteful human activity, because with an obsession you keep coming back and back and back to the same question and never get an answer.

~Norman Mailer

If a person is not talented enough to be a novelist, not smart enough to be a lawyer, and his hands are too shaky to perform operations, he becomes a journalist.

~Norman Mailer

The final purpose of art is to intensify, even, if necessary, to exacerbate, the moral consciousness of people.

~Norman Mailer

I met Jack Kennedy in November, 1946... We went out on a double

date and it turned out to be a fair evening for me. I seduced a girl who would have been bored by a diamond as big as the Ritz.

~Norman Mailer

One will feel the same subtle nausea coming into the city or waiting to depart from it that one feels now in such plastic catacombs as O'Hare's reception center in Chicago.

~Norman Mailer

Psychoanalysis and Zen, in my private psychic geometry, are equal to nicotine. They are anti-existential. Nicotine quarantines one out of existence.

~Norman Mailer

Being a real writer means being able to do the work on a bad day.

~Norman Mailer

Any workout which does not involve a certain minimum of danger or responsibility does not improve the body - it just wears it out.

~Norman Mailer

The mark of mediocrity is to look for precedent.

~Norman Mailer

Masculinity is not something given to you, but something you gain. And you gain it by winning small battles with honor.

~Norman Mailer

I had a quick grasp of the secret to sanity, it had become the ability to hold the maximum of impossible combinations in one's mind.

~Norman Mailer

Once a newspaper touches a story, the facts are lost forever, even to the protagonists.

~Norman Mailer

There is nothing safe about sex. There never will be.

~Norman Mailer

The desire for success lubricates secret prostitution in the soul.

~Norman Mailer

You don't know a woman until you've met her in court.

~Norman Mailer

I don't think life is absurd. I think we are all here for a huge purpose. I think we shrink from the immensity of the purpose we are here for.

~Norman Mailer

Writer's block is only a failure of the ego.

~Norman Mailer

Left-wingers are incapable of conspiring because they are all egomaniacs.

~Norman Mailer

There's a subterranean impetus towards pornography so powerful that half the business world is juiced by the sort of half sex that one finds in advertisements.

~Norman Mailer

Culture's worth huge, huge risks. Without culture we're all totalitarian beasts.

~Norman Mailer

There's that popular misconception of man as something between a brute and an angel. Actually man is in transit between brute and God.

~Norman Mailer

In my day the library was a wonderful place.... We didn't have visual aids and didn't have various programs...it was a sanctuary.... So I tend to think the library should remain a center of knowledge.

~Norman Mailer

Every moment of one's existence one is growing into more or retreating into less. One is always living a little more or dying a little bit.

~Norman Mailer

Chicago is the great American city, New York is one of the capitals of the world, and Los Angeles is a constellation of plastic; San Francisco is a lady

~Norman Mailer

The women's movement is filled with tyrants, just as men's political movements are equally filled.

~Norman Mailer

The war between being and nothingness is the underlying illness of the twentieth century. Boredom slays more of existence than war.

~Norman Mailer

What characterizes a member of a minority group is that he is forced to see himself as both exceptional and insignificant, marvelous and awful, good and evil.

~Norman Mailer

I don't hate women, but I think they should be kept in cages.

~Norman Mailer

The paradox is that no love can prove so intense as the love of two narcissists for each other.

~Norman Mailer

The world's not what I want it to be. But then no one ever said I had the right to design the world.

~Norman Mailer

Chicago was a town where nobody could forget how the money was made. It was picked up from floors still slippery with blood.

~Norman Mailer

Hip is the sophistication of the wise primitive in a giant jungle.

~Norman Mailer

I think it's bad to talk about one's present work, for it spoils something at the root of the creative act. It discharges the tension.

~Norman Mailer

Prevarication, like honesty, is reflexive, and soon becomes a sturdy habit, as reliable as truth.

~Norman Mailer

Boredom slays more of existence than war.

~Norman Mailer

Alimony is the curse of the writing class.

~Norman Mailer

There is a no man's land between sex and love, and it alters in the night.

~Norman Mailer

The ultimate tendency of liberalism is vegetarianism.

~Norman Mailer

People who live under fascism are not only miserable but they're full of shame. You just don't go in and inject democracy into them. They're

half crazy with their own.

~Norman Mailer

There's nothing glorious about being a professional. . . .
Professionalism probably comes down to being able to work on a bad day.

~Norman Mailer

In America all too few blows are struck into flesh. We kill the spirit here, we are experts at that. We use psychic bullets and kill each other cell by cell.

~Norman Mailer

The natural role of twentieth-century man is anxiety.

~Norman Mailer

Because there is very little honor left in American life, there is a certain built-in tendency to destroy masculinity in American men.

~Norman Mailer

Growth, in some curious way, I suspect, depends on being always in motion just a little bit, one way or another.

~Norman Mailer

The sense of a long last night over civilization is back again.

~Norman Mailer

Giving a camera to Diane Arbus is like putting a live grenade in the hands of a child.

~Norman Mailer

The horror of the Twentieth Century was the size of each new event, and the paucity of its reverberation.

~Norman Mailer

Existentialism is the kind of philosophy that makes for legendary children.

~Norman Mailer

Somewhere, something incredible happened in history - the wrong guys won.

~Norman Mailer

As many people die from an excess of timidity as from bravery.

~Norman Mailer

No heart is so hard as the timid heart.

~Norman Mailer

Madness is locked beneath. It goes into tissues, is swallowed by the cells. The cells go mad. Cancer is their flag. Cancer is the growth of madness denied.

~Norman Mailer

The difference between writing a book and being on television is the difference between conceiving a child and having a baby made in a test tube.

~Norman Mailer

When I read it ["Tough Guys Don't Dance"], I don't wince, which is all I ever ask for a book I write.

~Norman Mailer

Faction is that hybrid of documented fact and novelistic elaboration.

~Norman Mailer

Revolutions are the periods of history when individuals count most.

~Norman Mailer

What is there about polarity that is matter becoming more complex?

~Norman Mailer

Los Angeles is a constellation of plastic.

~Norman Mailer

I hate everything which is not in myself.

~Norman Mailer

The Irish are the only men who know how to cry for the dirty polluted blood of all the world.

~Norman Mailer

A high church for the true mediocre.

~Norman Mailer

The only journey of knowledge is from the depth of one being to the heart of another.

~Norman Mailer

Mailer's Law: A thing either gets better or it costs more to run it the way it was.

~Norman Mailer

Short-term amnesia is not the worst affliction if you have an Irish flair for the sauce.

~Norman Mailer

One thing I've learned in all these years is not to make love when you really don't feel it; there's probably nothing worse you can do to yourself than that.

~Norman Mailer

It's not the sentiments of men which make history but their actions.

~Norman Mailer

I was now at a university in New York, a professor of existential psychology with the not inconsiderable thesis that magic, dread, and the perception of death were the roots of motivation.

~Norman Mailer

There is probably no heterosexual alive who is not preoccupied with his latent homosexuality.

~Norman Mailer

The private terror of the liberal spirit is invariably suicide, not murder.

~Norman Mailer

God like Us suffers the ambition to make a destiny more extraordinary than was conceived for Him, yes God is like Me, only more so.

~Norman Mailer

I certainly do have this feeling of affection for the absolute sense of intellectual freedom that exists as a live nerve, a live wire, right through the center of American life.

~Norman Mailer

The art of the novel is to arrive at that artless point where your characters become more real than yourself.

~Norman Mailer

The true religion of America has always been America.

~Norman Mailer

When the time comes, they won't ask what kind of a Jew you are.

~Norman Mailer

I am not here only so that the blind might see, but to teach those who

thought they could see that they are blind

~Norman Mailer

I do believe that America's deepest political sickness is that it is a self-righteous nation.

~Norman Mailer

You have the right to speak your mind.

~Norman Mailer

Love is simple to understand if you haven't got a mind soft and full of holes. It's a crutch, that's all, and there isn't any one of us that doesn't need a crutch.

~Norman Mailer

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