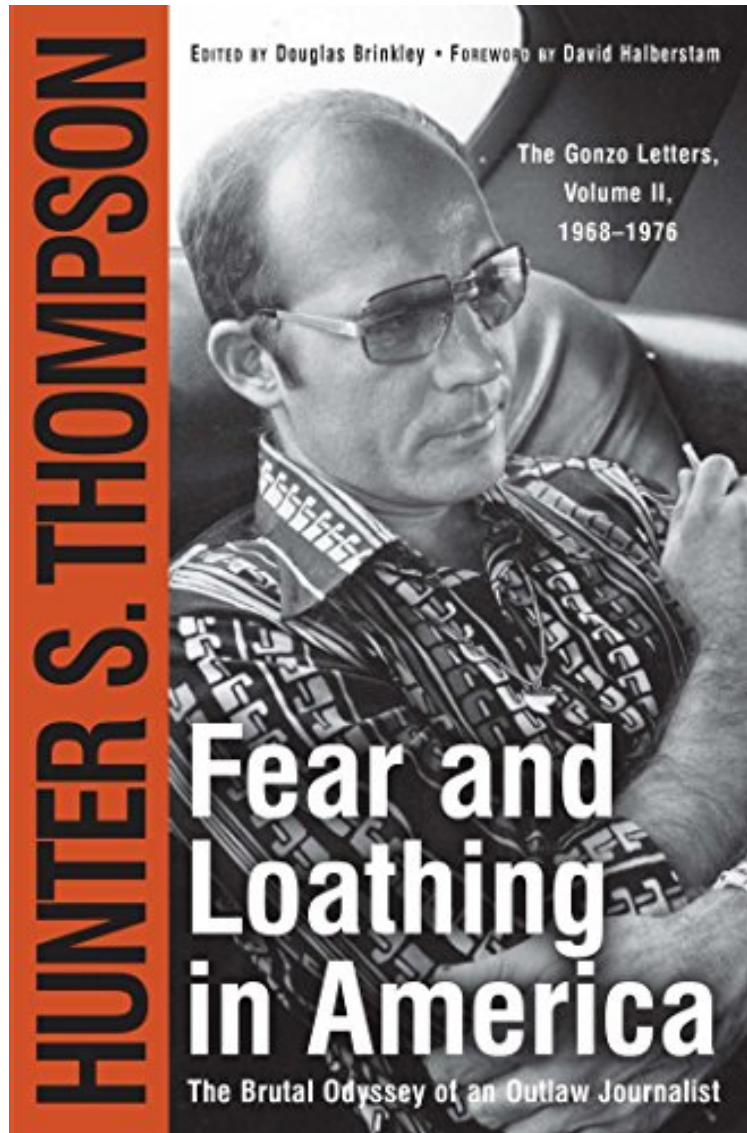


[Ebook free] Fear and Loathing in America : The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist

Fear and Loathing in America : The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist

Hunter S. Thompson

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Hunter S. Thompson : Fear and Loathing in America : The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Fear and Loathing in America : The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. HUNTER'S COLLECTED LETTERS VOLUME 2By

SLAPPYWAG1 This was a real disappointment and took me a long time to get through and has satiated my appetite for Hunter Thompson for a very long while. Covering a period of time that should have been exciting this second collected volume of Thompson's letters is a bit dull with a few bright moments, especially his view of John Wayne being America's Frankenstein monster and the total perversion of the American Dream. Anyone contemplating discovering Thompson will probably begin with *Fear and Loathing In Las Vegas* or *Hell's Angels* but I would recommend *The Great Shark Hunt* as a good primer to Thompson and save these collections of his letters once his better works have been exhausted.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. *Riding With The King* By Alfred Johnson I have written a number of reviews about the books of the late outlaw gonzo journalist "Doctor Gonzo" Hunter S. Thompson. Those reviews have centered on the impact of his journalistic work in the pantheon of American political and social criticism and the jail break way that he presented his material that was like a breath of fresh air coming from out in the jet stream somewhere after all the lame gibberish of most reportage in the 1960s and 1970s (extending unfortunately to this day). His seemingly one man revolt (okay, okay Tom Wolfe and others too but he was the king hell king, alright) against paid by the word minute stuff of hack journalism told us the "skinny," and told that straight, warts and all. The book under review however is more for aficionados like this writer who are interested in the minutiae about how this man created what he created, and the trials and tribulations, sometime bizarre, he went through to get the damn stuff published. And while one can rightly pass on the pre-Gonzo first volume of Thompson's letters this one is worth reading for it provides the back drop to Doctor Gonzo's most creative period, that period from about the publication of *Hell's Angels* until his "discovery" of one Jimmy Carter. The period when Hunter S. Thompson was "riding with the king." In those earlier reviews (especially *Hell's Angels*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, *Fear and Loathing On Campaign 1972*, and *Songs of The Doomed*) I began with some generic comments applicable to all his work and they apply here as well so I will recycle them and intersperse additional comments about this book as well.

Generally the most trenchant social criticism, commentary and analysis complete with a prescriptive social program ripe for implementation has been done by thinkers and writers who work outside the realm of bourgeois society, notably socialists and other progressive thinkers. Bourgeois society rarely allows itself, in self-defense or hidebound fear, to be skewered by trenchant criticism from within. This is particularly true when it comes from a known dope fiend, gun freak and all-around lifestyle addict like the late, lamented Dr. Hunter S. Thompson. Nevertheless, although he was far from any thought of a socialist solution to what ails society, particularly American society, and would reject such a political designation we of the extra-parliamentary could travel part of the way with him. We saw him as a kindred spirit. He was not one of us- but he was one of us. All honor to him for pushing the envelope of journalism in new directions and for his pinpricks at the hypocrisy of bourgeois society. Such men are dangerous. I am not sure whether at the end of the day Hunter Thompson saw himself or wanted to be seen as a voice, or the voice, of his generation but he would not be an unworthy candidate. In any case, his was not the voice of the generation of 1968 being just enough older than us to have been formed by an earlier, less forgiving milieu. The hellhole, red scare, cold war night in all its infamy that even singed my generation. His earliest writings show that shadow night blanket, the *National Observer* stuff, well-written but mainly "objective" stuff that a thousand other guys were writing (and were getting better paid for). Nevertheless, only a few, and with time it seems fewer in each generation, allow themselves to search for some kind of truth even if they cannot go the whole distance. This compilation under review is a hodgepodge of letters over the best part of Thompson's career, 1968-76. As with all journalists, as indeed with all writers especially those who are writing under the gun and for mass circulation media, these letters reveal the tremendous time pressures put on writers under contractual publishing deadlines, the ridiculous amount of time spent trying to "hustle" one's work around the industry even by a fairly well-known writer, the creative processes behind specific works (particularly the *Fear and Loathing* books) as outlined in several letters, including some amusing "cut and paste" efforts to use one article to serve about six purposes, and horror of horrors, damn writer's block (or ennui). Some of these letters are minor works of art; others seem to have been thrown in as filler. However the total effect is to show the back story of a guy who blasted old bourgeois society almost to its foundations. Others will have to push on further.

"Gonzo" journalism as it emerges in the crucible of these letters, by the way, is quite compatible, with historical materialism. That is, the writer is not precluded from interpreting the events described within himself/herself as an actor in the story. The worst swindle in journalism, fostered by the formal journalism schools, as well as in other disciplines like history and political science is that somehow one must be 'objective.' Reality is better served if the writer puts his/her analysis correctly and then gets out of the way. In his best work that was Hunter's way. And that premise shines through some of these letters. As a member of the generation of 1968 I would note that this was a period of particular importance which won Hunter his spurs as a journalist. Hunter, like many of us, cut his political teeth on raging deep into the night against one Richard Milhous Nixon, at one time President of the United States, common criminal (unindicted, of course), and all-around political chameleon. Thompson went way out of his way, and with pleasure, skewering that man when Nixon was riding high. He was moreover just as happy to kick Nixon when he was down, just for good measure. Nixon represented the "dark side" of the American spirit- the side that appeared then, and today, as the bully boy of the world and as craven brute. If for nothing else Brother Thompson deserves a place in the pantheon of journalistic heroes for this exercise in elementary

hygiene. Anyone who wants to rehabilitate THAT man before history please consult Thompson's work first. Hunter, I hope you find the Brown Buffalo wherever you are. Read this book. Read all his books to know what it was like when men and women plied the journalist trade for keeps. 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. On Jackets, Hard Work, and JannBy Uncle Mike As a big fan of Hunter's I especially enjoyed Volume I in this series, I found this edition much less satisfying. The problems with it lie chiefly in editor Brinkley's selection of material and his approach to assembling it. Thompson's laundry list likely makes more compelling reading than many scribes' magnum opuses (opii? opum?), it's true, but too many of the pieces here drown the reader in the minutiae of logistical details involved in putting a book together. The extensive correspondence between Random House Editor Jim Silberman and Hunter, for example, gets awfully repetitive after a while, with Hunter scrambling to find new ways to explain his writer's block. And the letters of complaint about his jacket are not very interesting; and the letters to Wenner become tedious early on. One thing I noticed in this volume versus the last is a tendency to run on at the mouth and stray from the (often vital) subject at hand -- illustrating what must have been the pivotal role of the editor in the heyday of Hunter's excellent 70's work. Finally, Brinkley's selections are odd and his annotations often bizarre. Thompson will mention some individual mentioned in passing a hundred pages ago and we scratch our heads and wonder who it is he's talking about, yet a passing reference to Hitler is footnoted with a helpful explanation of who Hitler was!! All in all this book has a more slapped-together feel, and perhaps it's because Thompson at this point was more heavily into drugs and liquor, but I found his earlier correspondence more arresting and interesting.

From the king of Gonzo journalism and bestselling author who brought you *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* comes another astonishing volume of letters by Hunter S. Thompson. Brazen, incisive, and outrageous as ever, this second volume of Thompson's private correspondence is the highly anticipated follow-up to *The Proud Highway*. When that first book of letters appeared in 1997, *Time* pronounced it "deliriously entertaining"; *Rolling Stone* called it "brilliant beyond description"; and *The New York Times* celebrated its "wicked humor and bracing political conviction." Spanning the years between 1968 and 1976, these never-before-published letters show Thompson building his legend: running for sheriff in Aspen, Colorado; creating the seminal road book *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*; twisting political reporting to new heights for *Rolling Stone*; and making sense of it all in the landmark *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72*. To read Thompson's dispatches from these years addressed to the author's friends, enemies, editors, and creditors, and such notables as Jimmy Carter, Tom Wolfe, and Kurt Vonnegut is to read a raw, revolutionary eyewitness account of one of the most exciting and pivotal eras in American history.

From *Publishers Weekly* "The years that were covered in these letters," says Thompson, "were like riding on a bullet train... with no sleep and no wires to hang on to." Apparently he hung onto his typewriter, though, churning out not only his drugged-up, wiggled-out road book *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* and similarly outrageous articles for *Rolling Stone* but also for letter after lengthy letter, in the same white-hot, turbo-charged style. Thompson altered permanently the nature of political journalism by injecting into his reportage the personal and the pathological, and this second volume of letters reads like rehearsals for his more public utterances, almost every page ringing with the sound of gunfire, revving motorcycle engines and partying that began at a level where most partying ends. What may surprise readers is the sweetness of much of the writing. While Thompson's correspondents include a virtual who's who of the era, from Tom Wolfe and Kurt Vonnegut to Jimmy Carter and George McGovern, he wrote to his fans like a kind of slightly deranged uncle, trying to convince one not to join the Hell's Angels, offering a second help with her term paper. Despite the occasional lollipop, however, Thompson's strong suit is still invective, of which he remains the unsurpassed master. It's been 30 years since his series of sulfurous missives to a local Colorado TV station for showing only "the cheapest, meanest swill" and to mail-order companies that dared send the journalist from hell what he deemed shabby merchandise, but surely Thompson's name still provokes shudders at the Alaska Sleeping Bag Company and elsewhere. Bw photos. (Dec. 13) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* The earlier volume of Thompson letters, *The Proud Highway* (1997), surprised many readers with its revealing glimpses into the making of a notorious journalist; moreover, those letters did not disappoint for they are as audacious as their author. With this second of a planned three-volume set of letters, the original gonzo journalist's "testament to his life and times" covers the period in which Thompson's seminal pieces were published or, at least, well into the making. During this period, Thompson was reporting on the political scene for *Rolling Stone*, which would yield his highly original road book, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* (1972); falling deeper into politics and increasing his knowledge of that world, which he pulled together for *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail*; and running his own crazy political race for sheriff in Aspen, Colorado, where, as publicity has it, he still lives in a "fortified compound" (shades of Garry Trudeau's Duke in his *Doonesbury* comic strip; incidentally, readers discover letters here, too, that reveal that at one point Thompson considered suing Trudeau for libel). Often the correspondence is so eventful that it impresses one as being fictitious, as with the letters between Thompson and Oscar Zeta Acosta, the Chicano activist/lawyer and model for Thompson's 300-pound Samoan attorney, Dr. Gonzo, in *Las Vegas*. And then there are the painful letters between writer and publisher, particularly Jann Wenner of *Rolling Stone* and Jim Silberman of *Random House*, that

trace the hard road many original writers travel to merely survive. The cast of characters is impressive, politicians such as Gary Hart and George McGovern, friends and colleagues such as cartoonist Ralph Steadman and writer William Kennedy. Summarily, Hunter's life and times are our life and times, and, oh, how wicked we've been. Bonnie Smothers
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Book Reading Hunter Thompson is like using gasoline for aftershave -- bracing.