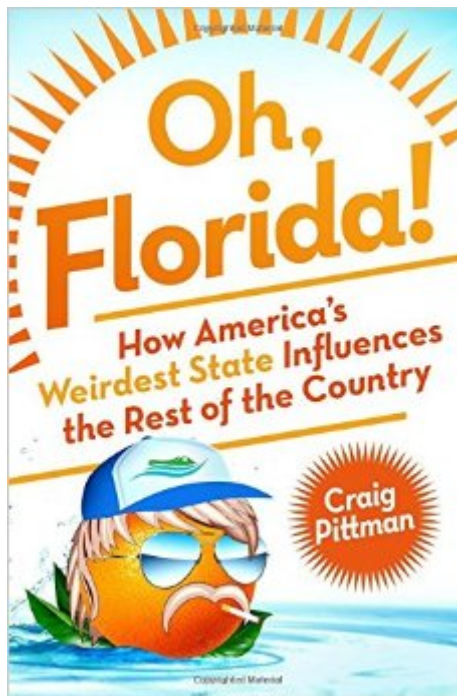


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Oh, Florida!: How America's Weirdest State Influences The Rest Of The Country



Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller Oh, Florida! That name. That combination of sounds. Three simple syllables, and yet packing so many mixed messages. To some people, it's a paradise. To others, it's a punch line. As Oh, Florida! shows, it's both of these and, more important, it's a Petri dish, producing trends that end up influencing the rest of the country. Without Florida there would be no NASCAR, no Bettie Page pinups, no Glenn Beck radio rants, no USA Today, no "Stand Your Ground," . . . you get the idea. To outsiders, Florida seems baffling. It's a state where the voters went for Barack Obama twice, yet elected a Tea Party candidate as governor. Florida is touted as a carefree paradise, yet it's also known for its perils-alligators, sinkholes, pythons, hurricanes, and sharks, to name a few. It attracts 90 million visitors a year, some drawn by its impressive natural beauty, others bewitched by its manmade fantasies. Oh, Florida! explores those contradictions and shows how they fit together to make this the most interesting state. It is the first book to explore the reasons why Florida is so wild and weird-and why that's okay. Florida couldn't be Florida without that sense of the unpredictable, unexpected, and unusual lurking behind every palm tree. But there is far more to Florida than its sideshow freakiness. Oh, Florida! explains how Florida secretly, subtly influences all the other states in the Union, both for good and for ill.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This book is a fun read but containing many serious events that occurred, some not too many years ago, others recent, some many years ago. Mr. Pittman, a native Floridian as is his wife and kids,

covers his state from the pan handle to Key West. He writes from today to yesterday.. I ordered this book because I lived in Florida for nineteen years. Two of my children were born in Florida. I have traveled all over the state and go back every year to visit. Key West seems not to be in the United States, but in a foreign country. Traveling down the keys, so much sky, so much water, very little land. One man I spoke to goes on vacation every year to Florida. People don't wear too many clothes he says. But Florida does get awfully hot. The book contains eighteen chapters about different times, history, politics, hurricanes, weather, land plus so much more. Craig Pittman is a journalist, a reporter and a columnist for the Tampa Bay Times. He grew up in Pensacola, his wife in Sarasota. So many Floridians have moved to this state from other places. This state is a melting pot of people from other states, Canada, the Caribbean, French speaking Haitians, Cubans, others parts of the Americas, plus Europeans, Africans, others. Many different religions, Santeria being one. The quiet area around Lake Wales is nice, but the state is growing too fast, too much. The Everglades is being invaded by people building homes. Tourists come to Florida to see a place so different than their own home states. And to enjoy the warm weather. The Everglades looks so much like the earth must have looked before mankind came into being. Alligators, an ancient race of dinosaurs, still are so much in evident and swim around in the swamps.

As a native Floridian, no one can say I deny or don't appreciate Florida's zany, hilarious side. However, Craig Pittman overdoes it in this book. In the introduction, he says that there are just as many amazing and wonderful things about Florida as there are shocking headlines providing click-bait around the country. However, the book only devotes two paragraphs in the epilogue to the better side of Florida. The intervening eighteen chapters leave you with the impression that Florida is a house full of drugs, guns, and garbage (p. 300), populated by bigoted shysters, hucksters, gamblers, and smugglers. In a state full of 20 million people, the majority of which moved here from somewhere else and have no ties to their community, it is only natural that wacky stories are common occurrences. Indeed, this book, by cherry-picking some of the best stories, is actually quite entertaining. However, after about the tenth chapter, it starts to get old. I read on, thinking that the other side of the story was right around the corner, but the good never came. I highly recommend "Florida: A Short History" by Michael Gannon for a more balanced perspective. Another part of the book which was funny at first but quickly wore out was the author's relentless hijacking of fun stories to fit a political agenda. Apparently, in this land of crooks, dirty cops, and gun-crazy rednecks, we hand-pick and send the worst of the worst to Tallahassee. However, this characterization only applies to Republicans, invariably portrayed either as lunatics or morons. The only exceptions to

Florida's wild (and deadly, at times) personality seem to be Democrats, especially journalists, who smugly report on their fellow Floridian's (only Republicans, of course) failings.

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