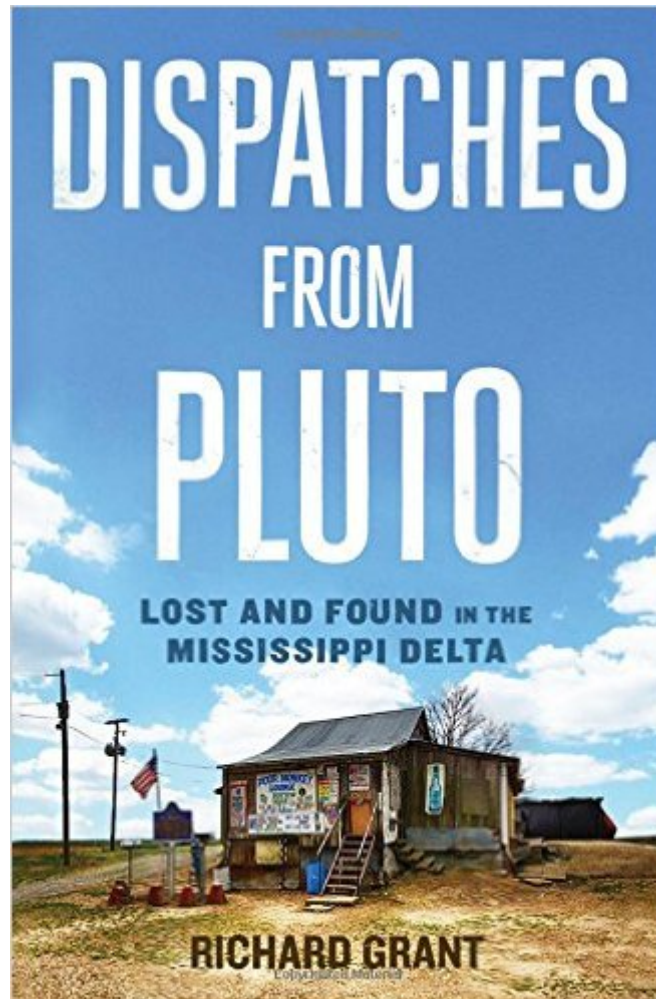


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Dispatches From Pluto: Lost And Found In The Mississippi Delta



Synopsis

Winner of the Pat Conroy Southern Book Prize Mississippi's #1 Bestseller of 2015 (The Clarion-Ledger) A New York Times Bestseller In Dispatches from Pluto, adventure writer Richard Grant takes on "the most American place on Earth" "the enigmatic, beautiful, often derided Mississippi Delta. Richard Grant and his girlfriend were living in a shoebox apartment in New York City when they decided on a whim to buy an old plantation house in the Mississippi Delta. Dispatches from Pluto is their journey of discovery into this strange and wonderful American place. Imagine A Year In Provence with alligators and assassins, or Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil with hunting scenes and swamp-to-table dining. On a remote, isolated strip of land, three miles beyond the tiny community of Pluto, Richard and his girlfriend, Mariah, embark on a new life. They learn to hunt, grow their own food, and fend off alligators, snakes, and varmints galore. They befriend an array of unforgettable local characters "blues legend T-Model Ford, cookbook maven Martha Foose, catfish farmers, eccentric millionaires, and the actor Morgan Freeman. Grant brings an adept, empathetic eye to the fascinating people he meets, capturing the rich, extraordinary culture of the Delta, while tracking its utterly bizarre and criminal extremes. Reporting from all angles as only an outsider can, Grant also delves deeply into the Delta's lingering racial tensions. He finds that de facto segregation continues. Yet even as he observes major structural problems, he encounters many close, loving, and interdependent relationships between black and white families "and good reasons for hope. Dispatches from Pluto is a book as unique as the Delta itself. It's lively, entertaining, and funny, containing a travel writer's flair for in-depth reporting alongside insightful reflections on poverty, community, and race. It's also a love story, as the nomadic Grant learns to settle down. He falls not just for his girlfriend but for the beguiling place they now call home. Mississippi, Grant concludes, is the best-kept secret in America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Dispatches from Pluto â€” Richard Grant Dispatches from Pluto (Simon & Schuster, 2015, 320 pages, \$16.00/11.99) is simply the best book on race and racism in America I've ever read. Things we say and don't say, relationships we have and don't have, long-held misunderstandings and new insights grown from distance and proximity. By moving from his comfortable liberalism in New York to the poorest town in the poorest region, in the poorest and blackest state in America, Richard Grant learns, explains, and helps bridge gaps that persist in every level of society and region of the country. By doing so in an engaging, often humorous, and always involved, deeply compassionate memoir from the depths of the Mississippi Delta, Grant has provided an invaluable service presented within the confines of a highly readable and ultimately important book. Grant's introduction to Mississippi had been through his writing in the 1990's about aging Delta Blues musicians. At a book party in William Faulkner's home town of Oxford, Mississippi, he met famed cookbook writer Martha Foose at a book reading and was invited to visit her Mississippi, the Mississippi Delta. Eventually, he decides to move to the small town of Pluto, MS, and buy a former plantation mansion from Foose's father, a local lawyer. Soon, he moves to Pluto with his partner Mariah, where they begin to learn to live in the South. Early in his stay, Foose tells Grant â€œThere's a secret to living here....Compartmentalize, compartmentalize, and then compartmentalize some more. If someone tells you that the Muslims are plotting to destroy America, or Obama is the Antichrist, you just seal that away in its own separate compartment and carry on till you find their good side. There's no sense in arguing with them.

I get the title, Dispatches from Pluto. Pluto is the town in the Mississippi Delta area that Richard and Mariah move to. I don't quite get the subtitle though, Lost and Found in the Mississippi Delta. Not sure what was supposed to have been lost, but it's easy to see that they found a whole new way of life in Pluto during this year in a life view. Richard and Mariah move into Doc Foose's old house. There they make battle with the wildlife including alligators, cottonmouths, armadillos, rats and more. And they learn to live closer to the land, hunting and growing some of their own food. The homey parts of the book are many at first and then the direction changes and there is less about setting up house and more of a discussion of racism in the Delta area. It's an interesting book. The

culture of the Delta is different from many other places including other places in the Southern United States. The culture itself is really split. There is black culture and white culture and even subdivisions within those categories. It was nice to read about the generosity and hospitality that most of the people showed Mariah and Richard. Whether the people were white or black, for the most part, they had positive encounters with them. Headshaking encounters occasionally, but more often than not pleasant encounters. I found the book to be interesting whether the author was writing about the struggles with setting up and maintaining a household in Pluto or having adventures of sorts meeting new and different people. He visits juke joints and a prison. He follows around a candidate for mayor. He visits blues legend, T-Model Ford. There are many more mini-adventures that make up the overall large adventure of moving from New York City to the Mississippi Delta area.

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