

The Longest Road: Overland in Search of America, from Key West to the Arctic Ocean

By Philip Caputo



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In *The Longest Road*, one of America's most respected writers takes an epic journey across America, Airstream in tow, and asks everyday Americans what unites and divides a country as endlessly diverse as it is large.

Standing on a wind-scoured island off the Alaskan coast, Philip Caputo marveled that its Inupiat Eskimo schoolchildren pledge allegiance to the same flag as the children of Cuban immigrants in Key West, six thousand miles away. And a question began to take shape: How does the United States, peopled by every race on earth, remain united? Caputo resolved that one day he'd drive from the nation's southernmost point to the northernmost point reachable by road, talking to everyday Americans about their lives and asking how they would answer his question.

So it was that in 2011, in an America more divided than in living memory, Caputo, his wife, and their two English setters made their way in a truck and classic trailer (hereafter known as "Fred" and "Ethel") from Key West, Florida, to Deadhorse, Alaska, covering 16,000 miles. He spoke to everyone from a West Virginia couple saving souls to a Native American shaman and taco entrepreneur. What he found is a story that will entertain and inspire readers as much as it informs them about the state of today's United States, the glue that holds us all together, and the conflicts that could cause us to pull apart.

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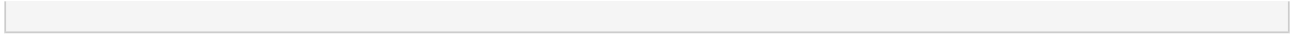
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Editorial Review

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Starred Review Miles traveled: 8,314. Vistas condemned: wind turbine farms. Vistas endorsed: the Natchez Trace and the Alaska Highway. Lesson learned: don't drive a trailer where you can't get it out. Such were Caputo's concrete experiences on a 2011 road trip in search of answers to a more ethereal question, What unifies America? That query, if already asked by literary roadsters like Jack Kerouac and John Steinbeck, bears repeating by writers of any stature, whether unknown or, like Caputo, renowned. Looking at age 70, Caputo felt a bucket-list impetus to drive the furthest border-to-border route in America: Key West, Florida, to Prudhoe Bay, Alaska. With his pickup truck towing a symbol of highway wanderlust, an Airstream trailer, Caputo convinced his two dogs and, perhaps less quickly, his wife to climb aboard. Vowing to avoid interstates and motels, he loosely followed the historic route of Lewis and Clark. Injecting misadventures into the narrative, Caputo recounts an overland voyage that emphasizes the people he meets: Christian evangelicals; volunteers helping tornado-struck Tuscaloosa, Alabama; a Missouri farmer; residents of Pine Ridge Indian Reservation; and an assortment of Alaskan eccentrics. Pithily capturing their characters and opinions about the state of America, Caputo snares reading devotees of a classic American theme, the road trip. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: A new book from the Pulitzer Prize-winning Caputo, famed for his soldier's memoir of the Vietnam conflict, *A Rumor of War* (1977), is always an event. --Gilbert Taylor

Review

"It is a joy it is to read these stories. I mean that: pure joy. *The Longest Road* is the best thing to come along since *Blue Highways* and *Travels With Charley*." ?*Doug Stanton*

"An] engaging travelogue of a remarkable journey packed with plenty of intriguing tidbits for armchair travelers." ?*Boston Globe*

"The ultimate road trip." ?*The Denver Post*

"A perfect vacation book that's funny and erudite at the same time." ?*New Haven Register*

"A new book from the Pulitzer Prize-winning Caputo...is always an event. Pithily capturing their characters and opinions about the state of America, Caputo snares reading devotees of a classic American theme, the road trip." ?*Booklist, starred review*

"[Caputo] keeps the narrative moving with his observant eye and mordant sense of humor." ?*The New York Times Book Review*

"Entertaining ...Provocative summer read." ?*Miami Herald*

"Caputo's long haul across the country is a worthy addition to your vicarious travel plans." ?*Washington Independent Review of Books*

"It's a good ride, and a good read." ?*Minneapolis Star Tribune*

"This reporter has more stamina in him than your average 21-year-old...Caputo creates captivating portraits of a wide variety of communities." ?*Kirkus*

“A continental tale that is always engaging and frequently reassuring.” ?*PW*

“A new travelogue for a new millennium.” ?*Kansas City Star*

“You will enjoy Caputo's road adventure across America.” ?*The Bismarck Tribune*

About the Author

Philip Caputo is a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist and author of many works of fiction and nonfiction, including *A Rumor of War*, one of the most highly praised books of the twentieth century. His novels include *Acts of Faith*, *The Voyage*, *Horn of Africa*, and his most recent, *Crossers*. He and his wife, Leslie Ware, divide their time between Norwalk, Connecticut, and Patagonia, Arizona.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Thomas Heiden:

In this 21st millennium, people become competitive in most way. By being competitive currently, people have do something to make these survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice simply by surrounding. One thing that often many people have underestimated this for a while is reading. Yes, by reading a reserve your ability to survive improve then having chance to stand than other is high. To suit your needs who want to start reading a book, we give you this *The Longest Road: Overland in Search of America, from Key West to the Arctic Ocean* book as starter and daily reading reserve. Why, because this book is more than just a book.

Edmund Hillman:

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