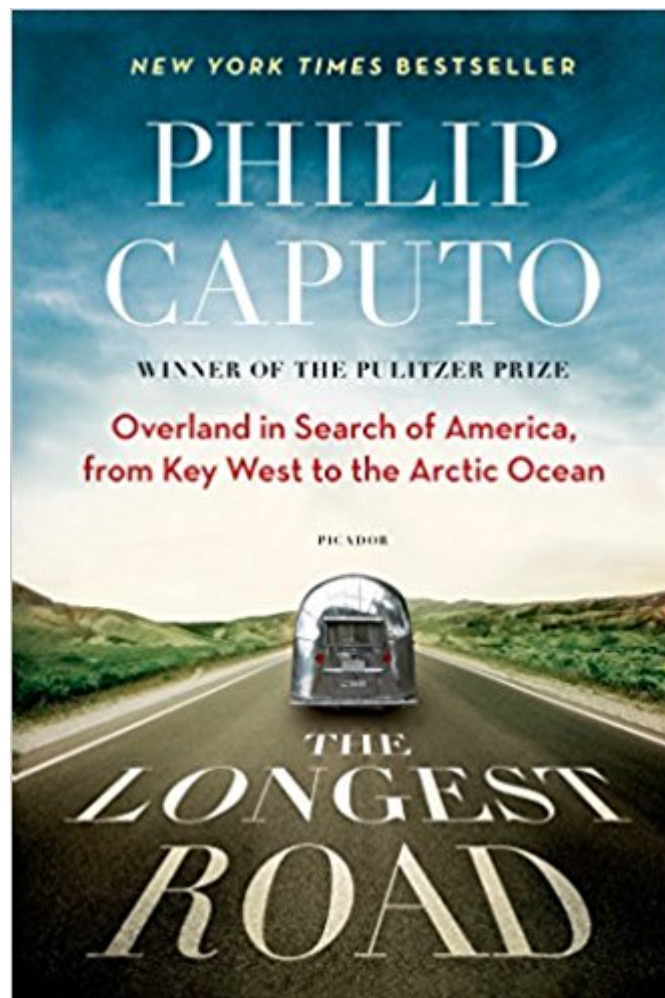




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The Longest Road: Overland In Search Of America, From Key West To The Arctic Ocean



Synopsis

IN THE LONGEST ROAD, ONE OF AMERICA'S MOST RESPECTED WRITERS TAKES AN EPIC JOURNEY ACROSS THE NATION, AIRSTREAM IN TOW, AND ASKS EVERYDAY AMERICANS WHAT UNITES AND DIVIDES A COUNTRY AS DIVERSE AS IT IS VAST. Standing on a wind-scourged 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 Americans about their lives and asking how they would answer his question. 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 sixteen thousand 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 pull us apart.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

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 --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

• The ultimate road trip. • The Denver Post [An] engaging travelogue of a remarkable journey packed with plenty of intriguing tidbits for armchair travelers. • The Boston Globe 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) It is a joy 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, New York Times bestselling author of *Horse Soldiers* [Caputo] keeps the narrative moving with his observant eye and mordant sense of humor. • The New York Times Book Review 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] gives us a view not only of the 17,000 miles he traveled but of the many people with whom he spoke. The novelist and multi-award-winning journalist, whose *Rumor of War* was one of the defining books of the Vietnam era, should get it just right. • Library Journal A continental tale that is always engaging and frequently reassuring. • PW This reporter has more stamina in him than your average 21-year-old [Caputo creates captivating portraits of a wide variety of communities. • Kirkus

I loved this book. I read it while on a journey myself and appreciated so much of what Caputo experienced. I've been to a lot of the same places he writes about. He not only gives a great picture of the beauty of America, it's vastness and many variations of cultures, topography, and scenic byways but he has sensitive conversations with the people he meets and their struggles and successes in life with wherever they've chose to set down roots. He discusses the trials of traveling with dogs, mechanical breakdowns, and just going with whatever comes your way. Plus he's a great writer. Similar to *Travels with Charley*/John Steinbeck but modernized. Highly recommend.

Road-trips, I really like road-trips, whether it is to Sonoita, Arizona, for a Saturday night or as my wife and I did this past July drive to eight states. It is a great feeling awaking in Deadwood, South Dakota, and wondering where we shall drive to today. As such it was with excitement when Philip Caputo's new book *The Longest Road* was released, as perhaps he and his wife Leslie Ware completed the ultimate road-trip. Phil is an author I have long admired. I still remember reading his epic memoir *A Rumor of War* when I returned home from Vietnam, which remains the work that most, defines that war. I have enjoyed all 15 of his books and also have a special appreciation for his *Acts of Faith* and more recently *Crossers*. Phil and Leslie begin their ultimate road-trip driving 8300 miles from the southernmost point in the United States (Key West, Florida) to the northernmost point at Deadhorse, Alaska. They were accompanied by their two English setters Sage and Sky and traveled with an old 1962 Airstream. Phil has felt America in recent years was growing in anger and division and he simply wanted to discover what is holding people together if anything. The journey was enjoyable reading, not just for the places they visited, but the stories of the people they met. They tended to avoid the interstates and large cities so primarily the travel was through a kinder and gentler nation. He mixes humor throughout the story, especially describing various episodes of exchanges between his wife Leslie and himself. When one is married to a Leslie (which I also am) you know the road traveled will never be dull. I am not sure if Phil really discovered the reason of anger in America or what is keeping people together, although I do know that when I finished this book I felt good and I felt happy.

I just recently heard about this book and acquired a copy from a seller on . After reading it I found it to be a mandatory addition to my existing trilogy of modern "American" road books along with Steinbeck's *Travel's With Charley*, William L.H. Moon's *Blue Highways* and Dayton Duncan's *Out West*. Now it is a tetralogy...or if one includes Francis Parkman's *Oregon Trail*...the original

cross country "road book" from the mid-19th century...it would be part of the pentalogy. Anyway, Caputo's take on the U.S. circa 2011 is well worth the read. Though not as deep to me as Moon's legendary "Blue Highway's" or as focused as Duncan's "Out West" (following the Lewis & Clark trail) it is a great book nonetheless. Of all the 4 (or 5 with Parkman) authors he is the only one to have human company - his wife was along to keep him in line - though he did take a dog (two actually) as did Steinbeck with his "Charley." There are many more in depth reviews that get into more details. Suffice to say the "trip" with Caputo & family is a fascinating adjunct to update the other earlier road books.

I enjoy road trips and travel essays so this one was right up my alley. Disappointed originally as he veered off a "blue road", US 41 in Southwest Florida on his way to Tampa once he discovered what an ugly clog it is in that part of the country and headed to Interstate 75 as most of us do. Too bad, I was looking forward to comments on Port Charlotte, Venice, Brandenton, Anna Maria Island and other little known gems in my corner of the world. But soon, back on the road through the smaller towns and lots of interesting places in search of "what holds America together". Interesting folks along the way, and some good pragmatic advice for others making this trip or similar. Enjoyable read if you are a road trip fan.

Overall, a disappointing read. Caputo never really develops the reason for his journey - what's the glue that holds America together as a country? - or even makes much of an effort. He's kind of a grouchy old man, definitely a little sexist, and he traveled through the South without seeming to observe or have much to say about race in America. Much more time was spent grousing about backing up his Airstream than truly engaging with people about the supposed purpose of his journey. I'd skip this book and read Steinbeck's Travels with Charley.

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