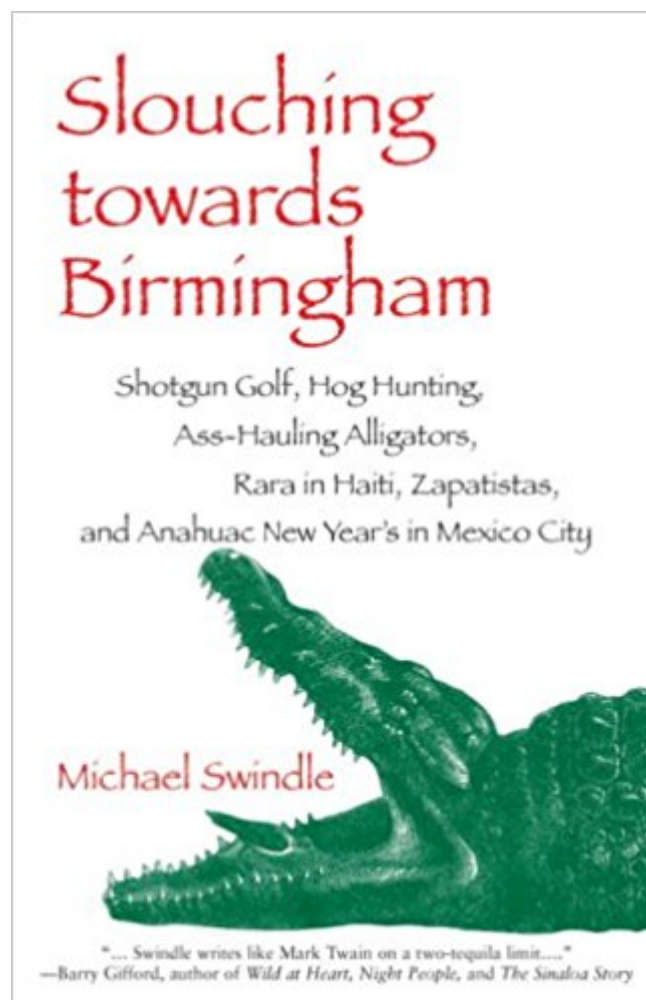




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Slouching Towards Birmingham: Shotgun Golf, Hog Hunting, Ass-Hauling Alligators, Rara In Haiti, Zapatistas, And Anahuac New Year's In Mexico City





Synopsis

In the vivid and outlandish tradition of Hunter S. Thompson, journalist Michael Swindle shares his most bizarre, laugh out loud accounts of his travels: cockfights in Cajun country and wild boar hunts in the Everglades; "hog dog" rodeo in northern Louisiana and ass-hauling alligators in southern Louisiana; state to state fish throws in Florida to Alabama; and hollerin' contests in North Carolina. Other pieces explore a Haitian military dictatorship involved in voodoo and a story that starts with a Zapatista march on Mexico City and ends with an Anahuac Indian New Year's ceremony for the year 5722. Always entertaining, Swindle has a gift for bringing to life a folksy array of coastal characters, and shows a willingness to unflinchingly examine some controversial subject matter as well.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"Slouching towards Birmingham reads like a collaboration between Hunter S. Thompson and Roy Blount, Jr., edited by Willie Morris. Read it through, then read it aloud for full affect."-Allen Barra, Wall Street Journal
"These are wonderful stories by a man who grew wise and fearless enough to let his roots show. Mike Swindle comes from a real place and he makes it real in words like only the very best Southern writers can."-Andrei Codrescu
"Swindle writes like Mark Twain on a two-tequila limit."-Barry Gifford

Michael Swindle is an author, freelance writer, poet, actor, art curator, and aficionado of the chile picante. His feature articles and reviews have appeared in numerous national magazines and

newspapers, including Details, Entertainment Weekly, The New York Times Book Review, The Washington Post, and The Los Angeles Times. In addition, Swindle is the author of Mullethead (Crane Hill Publishers, 1998) and editor of Sequin Artists of Haiti (Contemporary Arts Center, 1994). Born in Alabama, and raised there and in Mississippi, he now lives and works in New Orleans.

I just discovered Michael Swindle's *Slouching Towards Birmingham*. I was raised in Birmingham, Alabama, so parts of this book were somewhat nostalgic for me. It is kind of a "coming of (middle) age" epic. Swindle sets out to do all the things and see all the places he missed, or maybe just passed up, in his sometimes misspent youth. One of the most charming things about all these tales is his love and respect for the people he meets. Without exception, he accepts them as they are, and leaps right in with them in whatever adventure awaits. His tales have a Plimptonian feel. Ever wonder what it's like to hunt wild boars in the Florida swamps? He wondered. Now he knows. Now I do too! Through Swindle's telling, I not only "saw" Yella, the old hog-hunting hound, I heard him, and might have even petted him. I dragged my tired, aching, sleep-deprived, foggy-brained ass through that godforsaken hog farm with them. Swindle's easy, yet vivid descriptions, put me directly into the swamps and bayous of Louisiana, the backwoods of Mississippi, the NASCAR races of North Carolina, and the Florida Everglades. In each of his vignettes, the scene is so richly described I could not only see, but feel it. From the auction-like roar of the Cormier's Cockpit "croupier" to the serenity of the Mississippi lakes, he swept me into the action, so I was no longer a voyeur, but a participant. Each story brought the thought to me, "This is my favorite!" In the end, I can't choose one. I'm exhausted, though. I've wrestled alligators, hunted wild boars, partied at NASCAR races, revisited Legion Field in Birmingham, AL for the legendary Alabama/Auburn football competition, and finally nestled in Gene Crutcher's Bookstore basement again, where Gene introduced me to probably the same books to which he introduced Michael Swindle. One of the most enjoyable aspects of reading these stories is the dry humor. Written in easy conversational tone, it's like I'm listening to him tell the stories, and smiling throughout. My cheeks were sore when I finished. I feel like I know Michael Swindle; like I just had a long conversation with him. So how can I summarize? Nostalgic, fun, adventurous, funny, picturesque, parade of real people, a treasure of Americana... is a start.

You may go to college, you may go to school, you may drive a black Cadillac, don't be nobody's fool. -Elvis Presley '55 I've been trying to write this for the past 2 mos. It's really a crime our southern culture has been packaged and sold. It's like buying red-hots at Wal-Mart. The Hot-Shots finally did

it. They bought our sports,music,food and writers.Our damned culture for Christ-sake. Wrapped it up, in a neat package, sold man. Lock- stock and barrel for the allmighty dollar. Thank God, for one of the last,outlaw southern writers. A gentleman, and reporter.A man that brings us the essence of the dying breed.Michael D.Swindle, will always be a true original. I love him. When it,s gone it,s gone.

But I read the whole book, and thoroughly enjoyed every chapter in it. Swindle reveals some good and bad attributes about living in the South, and finding political refuge in literary and other hard-drinking circles. Having lived and worked in Louisiana, Texas, Alabama, and Georgia, I couldn't agree more with his prognosis and descriptions. I'll have to find some more of his work. This is a great read.And the chapter on hog hunting was pretty decent.

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