



The Rogue: Searching for the Real Sarah Palin

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rogue (rŏg), n: An elephant that has separated from a herd and roams about alone, in which state it is very savage.—*Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary*

After three years of research, bestselling journalist Joe McGinniss presents his already controversial and much anticipated investigative chronicle of Sarah Palin as an individual, politician, and cultural phenomenon.

In his critically acclaimed book about Alaska, *Going to Extremes*, the fledgling state itself was Joe McGinniss's subject. Although he didn't hesitate to reveal the many flaws and contradictions behind its "last frontier" image, McGinniss fell in love with the land and its people. More than three decades later, he returned to Alaska in search of its most famous resident, Sarah Palin.

On Election Day 2008, McGinniss began his on-the-ground reporting that culminated, famously, in his moving next door to Sarah Palin in spring 2010. *THE ROGUE* is the eagerly awaited result of his research and writing: a startling study of the illusion and reality of Sarah Palin—and a probing look at the Alaska and the America that produced her. Sometimes funny, sometimes frightening, always provocative and illuminating, *THE ROGUE* answers the questions "Who is she, really?," "How did she happen?," and "Will she ever go away?"

In all of his books, McGinniss has scrutinized the mysterious space between image and reality—how that space is created, negotiated, and/or manipulated. Now, with *The Rogue*, McGinniss combines his deep appreciation of the place Sarah Palin comes from with his uncanny ability to penetrate the façades of people in public life. The result is an extraordinary double narrative that alternately traces Palin's curious rise to political prominence and worldwide celebrity status and recounts the author's day-to-day experiences as he uncovers the messy reality beneath the glossy Palin myth.

Readers will find *THE ROGUE* at once bitingly insightful, hilarious, and profoundly ominous in what it reveals—not just about the dark underpinnings of a potential presidential nominee but also in regard to the huge numbers of Americans who passionately support her.

The Rogue: Searching for the Real Sarah Palin Details

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From Reader Review The Rogue: Searching for the Real Sarah Palin for online ebook

Lisa Carlson says

I wanted to read this book for several reasons. As a liberal woman who's interested in politics I'm always interested to learn what women in politics are saying and how they raise the bar. Let's face it women are always held to a higher standard especially in the game of politics. I watch Sarah Palin on news sound bites as I'm waiting for some reason to like her. This book will give you plenty of reasons not to be a fan of hers. McGinniss weaves the story of who he discovered Palin is between his experience living next to her and how she grew-up and her introduction to politics. It's fair to say her upbringing explains how she acts with people and how she parents. There are plenty of people who have spoken to McGinniss to make this a credible account of someone who has no business being in politics. She abused her position as mayor and governor many times-spending money for the benefit of herself, treated long-time employees poorly often firing them for no reason and is nothing close to the Christian profile she professes to be. I can't imagine what McCain was thinking when he selected her as his running mate; one of the greatest blunders ever. Suffice to say Palin won't run for President because she has too many questionable situations which would come to light, make people cringe and make her look ridiculous. I have and am in the process of reading McGinnis's other books; I find him to be a credible and integrity based writer who is probably sick of talking about this narcissistic woman.

Jennifer says

I admit it....I gave this book 5 stars because I loathe Sarah Palin, and Joe McGinnis completely trashes her, with the help of quite a few other people who are more than willing to go on record and tell what happened from their point of view. The entire time I was reading it, I was saying to myself, "Yeah!" and "Right on!" and "What on Earth was John McCain thinking 4 years ago?". If Palin is half as bad as McGinnis makes her out to be in this book, it's a very good thing that she did not become Vice President. For much of the book, I had the phrase from the classic Saturday Night Live skit: "I can see Russia from my house!" running in my mind.

McGinnis admits himself that he did not talk to any of Palin's friends or supporters, which is a weakness of the book- it is very one-sided, and McGinnis explains this weakness by telling the readers that evidently the Palins put the clampdown on their friends and political allies to not talk to him, so that they could then point out that he didn't talk to any of her friends or political supporters. However, the one side that McGinnis does have is rather potent- it's the book version of slicing open a jalapeno pepper, rubbing the juice on your fingers and then rubbing your eyes. The effect is so overwhelming, you can't think of anything else.

One aspect of the book I find so troubling, and yet so fascinating, is how Palin was elected to city council, mayor, and Governor of Alaska with so many hidden agendas at work- and by blatant manipulation of facts that voters in a town like Wasilla should have seen through, as well as utter incompetence in the actual business of running a city or state. I think it's a fine parallel of national politics.

Towards the end of the book, he has a discussion about the Palins' son Trig, who has Down Syndrome. It apparently is possible that the Palins somehow acquired a child with Down Syndrome to further appeal to the pro-life crowd. If that is indeed true- and I am not saying it is, but McGinnis makes a case that it could be

possible, based on the timing of events (Palin was in Dallas when she went into labor and flew back to Alaska for the delivery) I find it morally repugnant. As a woman who has given birth twice, from my own experience, I can say that if I were in labor with a child I knew had special needs, my first thought would have been "get me to a hospital- any hospital!", not "I have to get back to Alaska; can't have a "fish picker" born in Texas". So what was the hurry to get back to Alaska?

However, as I said at the beginning of my review- I loathe Palin. To me she represents a great deal of what is going wrong with politics in this country. So I'm biased in my 5 star review.

Gabby says

I used to have some respect for Joe McGinniss based on some of his earlier books. After reading this trash, I question why I ever believed a word he previously wrote. He obviously knows nothing about objectivity, but he's got mud slinging and unverified source material down to a science. For me, this subject is NOT about whether or not we like Sarah Palin nor what she says and does. Instead it's about Joe McGinniss out to further demean and humiliate someone to whom the press has given unprecedented hatred. What IS it about Sarah Palin that seems to threaten men so much? Her treatment from women isn't a whole lot better, but I haven't seen this much vitriolic name-calling and malicious oratory directed at someone since Roseanne Barr declared herself a Domestic Goddess. I mean, c'mon... he rents a house next door to Sarah Palin, and then acts all surprised that she doesn't drop in to see him with some homemade cookies and all the time in the world to answer his obnoxious questions? Puhleeeeeeeze. When did Joe McGinniss lose all sense of reality? While Joe may want to paint a portrait of some crazed lunatic locking herself away from her friendly, neighborhood snoop hellbent on writing an unflattering tell-all about her, I saw a woman who has learned all about wolves in sheep's clothing and decides for the sake of her whole family to ignore the hate mongrel living beside her. It seems that Joe came a little late to the Let's-Lynch-Sarah Party, because the general public wasn't exactly bowled over by his book. That's a good thing because the only purpose it might serve is kindling for a fireplace in Alaska. Maybe Joe could heat some water for a nice cup of tea.

One more thing. GR ought to give the option of zero with their stars. That's what this mess of a document really deserves.

Picklefactory says

Simultaneously hilarious and disturbing. Joe is a fine writer: his exasperation with being subjected to baseless slurs in the national media after returning to Alaska to investigate the Palin phenomenon only really shines through once or twice. (I went and looked a couple of these up and yup, happened pretty much the way he says.)

Joe spends quite a bit of time excoriating the media for giving Sarah Palin the platform that she certainly had done nothing to earn, but even more emphasis here would have been welcome. He also leavens the endless Palin nonsense with moments of his pure love for Alaska's people and land, the words of the Alaskans who have decided that Palin has betrayed them, and a hysterical running joke about being offered guns by nearly everyone he meets socially.

It's obviously a good thing that Palin's bowed out of 2012, but I think the national media will continue to throw up more of these frighteningly ignorant religious candidates as long as it gets good ratings from us poor suckers who care enough to be outraged: cf. Michele Bachmann.

Dee Green says

Like the rest of the nation, I am intrigued by Sarah Palin but understand that there are two sides to everything. So, I thought I'd see what he had to say. It is garbage is what I have to say. His writing is so biased that I find it hard to believe that he is even a credible author, but apparently he is. He claims that his intent was innocent and that he had no intention of smearing Palin's name, but in the book those claims are so childish that they are laughable. "It was just a coincidence that I moved next door to her and yet she completely overreacted that a journalist who has previously attacked her moved next door while writing a book to humiliate her." (Not actually a quote, but it's pretty much the theme). He brings up all kinds of bad things that her kids' friends or acquaintances have done and tries to make the Palins guilty by association. One of his sources was The National Enquirer, if that tells you anything. After reading this book, I think that Joe McGinniss fits right in with that rag.

I guess that the same way that there are extremist that think that Palin can do no wrong, there are extremists that actually believe this guy's crap. I'm just glad that I didn't pay for this book. McGinniss' release of this book in time for the election hype is just a ploy to exploit Sarah for financial gain in the same way that he accuses Sarah of exploitation.

On a side note, I wonder how much Traeger paid him...

Debra says

I've read several books by outstanding writer and reporter Joe McGinniss and he is the real deal. Excellent portrait of one of the most dangerous people on the political scene.

Susan says

I'm not really sure how to review this book. Although I'm not a fan of Sarah Palin, it seems to stretch credulity that she has few, if any, redeeming qualities. The book shows a very negative picture of Palin, perhaps exacerbated by the fact that practically none of her friends would consent to be interviewed by the author. The author's dislike of Governor Palin was over the top.

McGinnis inserts himself into the story as Palin plays the victim when he moves in next door. Consequently, McGinnis himself ends up playing the victim as well. Too much self-absorption on both the parts of the author and his subject. The much larger question is how much do we ever know about the real lives of public figures. Will the man or woman with real integrity please stand up? If a politician is a real sleaze bag, it will probably be found out (e.g. John Edwards). Meanwhile, we have to rely to a great extent on the free press to uncover hypocrisy, misconduct, and/or criminal activities. But I digress--back to Sarah. I think the best that can be said about her is that she is a pretty face with no capabilities to handle high elective office. The worst may be that she is a complete phony.

By the time I finished the book, I was completely bored with both Palin and author McGinnis. It is time for all of us to move on.

Brian says

I nearly finished the book in one sitting, and it is a splendid piece of writing. Particularly, its stark description of the coexistence of a fundamentalist and a sane Alaska.

The most evocative passages are not those written by McGinnis, but what he draws out of the residents of Wasilla. Where, in their words, "suddenly you got busted for growing pot in your back shed. You got a ticket if your dog barked too loud. You got a ticket if you had a hole in your muffler. For a place that prided itself on being outside the conventional lifestyle, this was a lot to swallow..." Who also say, "if I'm heading Outside, I'll leave you some guns on the counter... It just pisses me off. A man comes up here to do his job, and people like next door make life difficult. It ain't right." McGinnis himself is always a delight: "Stambaugh [after a tortuously worded attack from Palin] is never disrespectful, but there are one or two occasions where I suspect him of expressing nonchalance. On the other hand, maybe he's just being benign."

The tale of evangelical assault on a municipal government has a chilling clarity. The guided tour of corrupt Alaskan affairs is compelling, as far as I can see, not even because Palin was so much worse than usual, but rather because she was par for the course. This is going to be a classic story of both state and small-town politics.

As for the events that unfurled once McCain started hinting he needed a little help with the Christian right... well, I'm glad somebody has written it all down. Future generations looking back at our insane little early 21st century republic are not going to believe it.

McGinnis, and his publisher's lawyers, must have already culled most of the worst of the personal comments... still, toning down a few of those that remain would have made for an even stronger book.

To digress slightly, I found it highly demoralizing to read the closing chapters, assessing and trying to derail Palin's chances for the presidency, just as two US citizens were taken out by a flying CIA robot... including one who was just the magazine editor. Has it occurred to no one that there may be a Rogue in the executive branch a year from now? To borrow a phrase from William Gibson, maybe America's dystopia is going to be evenly distributed after all.

tuttle88 says

I thought this was a really interesting and entertaining book. Weaves the controversy about the author moving next to the Palins in with what he originally went to Alaska to write about which is what Alaskans now think about Sarah Palin.

I don't think it would change anyone's mind about her. If you like her you'll hate this book if you don't like her you'll like it I guess. But as someone who thinks she is dangerous and obnoxious I loved it.

Matt says

Do not judge a book by its cover, some say. Others tell me that I need a well-rounded opinion before I can really have an opinion. So, after i read GOING ROGUE a while back, I had an unusually better opinion of Sarah Palin, at least for a while. When this book was making so much hype, I had to try it. Not disappointed in the least.

Some people, even on here, tell me that it is such a one-sided portrayal of the VP candidate for the GOP's '08 failure to win the White House. Others loved the book. Mark another tick in the LOVE column. McGinniss, though vilified by much of the media, took up house next door to the Palins and began interviewing those close by to get their opinions. He talks in a great style and presents info through stories rather than by sensationalising it all for the world to see, a la tabloids. My jaw dropped, my eyes bugged out, and I did even utter a "WTF" twice in the store while listening as grocery shopped. Dysfunctional family, thou hast a friend in both the Gosselins and Palins, moms leading the packs. This woman is portrayed as such a Sarah-centred person that I cannot believe that she ever got anywhere in life.

Covering herself in the evangelical Christian ultra-right wing belief system, she felt God was there, leading her to salvation. I was horrified to see how she treated her children and husband, tossing them under the bus when it best suited her. Alas, she could take credit for their successes like no tomorrow, and did so repeatedly. This woman also bashed those who did not take up their swords on the battles she led, and tried to castigate those who may ever speak out against her. McGinniss had to do many of his interview with anonymity to ensure he got the story, for people were so scared of her. Is that any way to live your life?

Toss in the controversial mayorial stint, her failed attempt at the Naval Observatory, villification of McGinniss for even being next door, and the gubernatorial shit show she created and you have the crux of the book. Add the Trig saga (was she prego? why do what she said she did?) and how she used the child as a prop to soften the hearts of many and you have some great reading.

I know, sensational journalism sells and tossing mud at people gets us nowhere but at the front of the line for gossiping. That said, I have to ask two questions:

- 1) What benefit does Joe McGinniss gain from making all this up?
- 2) What the HELL was McCain and his people thinking when they chose her as the GOP's VP candidate. VETTING PEOPLE!!!!

Kudos Mr. McGinniss. A great book on a woman whose surely hard to write about in a balance fashion.

Bill Kerwin says

Don't believe what they say in "the lamestream media"--this is a well-written, interesting and moral book.

"Serious" people like Howie Kurtz and Steve (AKA "Mr. Cokie") Roberts have criticized it for being unethical (because of its many anonymous sources) and unprofessional (for the way McGinnis intrudes

himself into the narrative and engages in unsourced speculation). But Kurtz and Roberts--both beltway pundits with only dubious claims to be serious journalists--do not seem to understand or respect the tradition from which McGinnis comes.

McGinnis is one of the younger "new journalists"--an unfortunate term now, since their heyday was thirty to forty years ago—who increased the number of journalistic tools to include an unabashed personalization of the authorial voice. They were real investigative journalists too, but felt that this more personal style could yield a richer, more nuanced presentation of atmosphere than a *pro forma* pretense of objectivity ever could.

The "new journalism" method is particularly helpful here, since McGinnis inevitably becomes a part of the story when he is denounced by Palin and others for renting the house next door to the former governor, and because this method inspires him to capture vividly the atmosphere of Wasilla: a fierce Alaskan independence of mind coupled with an uneasy fear of the vindictive power of the Palins. This atmosphere, incidentally, almost requires McGinnis' use of anonymous sources, since he discovers very few Wasillans willing to go on the record for fear of Todd and Sarah's retaliation.

The book is written in an elegant, easy style, and captures through many vivid details what he convinces me is the "real Sarah Palin": a narcissistic *poseuse* who exploits a reactionary philosophy in a singularly vicious, tenth-grade "mean girl" style.

Marialyce says

I have given this book the honor (?) of being the first in my new shelf entitled "Books that never should have been written." If any, all, some, of this is true, first of all who really cares? It is always easy to find people who are willing to trash other people because of any number of human frailties like envy, greed, not to mention if you want to be in the news, your fifteen minutes of fame.

Seriously though, if you really want to be taken seriously and are writing a book about another, you should not move in next door to your intended victim and I could not help but think as I read, that Mrs Palin was a victim. Even if most of this was true, McGinniss seemed to take pleasure out of reporting all the details. I did not get one iota of human compassion, but just a matter of going for the jugular and squeezing every ounce of blood out of it that he could. Heck, who among us would not feel a bit violated by an action such as this? As far as I was concerned, this author lost all credibility by that action. He had to know that this would create an uproar which of course it did, and so that meant a ready audience for his book. He did get that so desired fifteen minutes of fame and for free too! Sold a lot of books I am sure because of it. Got his name in the news and blasted across the TV screens too!

There is a smack of yellow journalism here that I just could not swallow. I just felt the book was biased from the get go. Whether you like or dislike Mrs Palin, is really not the point in my mind as you read this. I was just looking for an account that put everything, the good, the bad, the ugly in perspective. This book just concentrated on two things or really three things.....the bad, the ugly and the downright dirty scandalous reporting one expects to find in newspapers commonly referred to as rags.

Vegantrav says

This is the second Sarah Palin book I've read this year, the first being Geoffrey Dunn's *The Lies of Sarah Palin*. There really is little in McGinniss's book that was not already covered in Dunn's book other than some salacious details like Palin's fling with basketball star Glenn Rice or Todd and Sarah's cocaine use. Both books paint the same general portrait of Palin, and they obtain their information from many sources who are politically simpatico with Palin (conservative Republicans) or who were at one time friends or close associates of Palin: Palin is a lying, vindictive, incompetent know-nothing who does, however, possess a canny ability to manipulate and deceive people and use them to her own political and personal ends.

McGinniss makes his book almost as much about himself and the firestorm that arose when he moved next door to Palin, and McGinniss uses far fewer named sources than does Dunn. McGinniss, though, seems to have talked to many people who were close to Palin but who would only speak as unnamed sources for fear of retribution from Palin. Most of the details that McGinniss reveals, however, have already been substantiated by named sources in Dunn's book.

What both McGinniss and Dunn's books show is that Sarah Palin is quite shrewd at manipulating people to her own ends and at playing the political game in Alaska, but she is a hypocrite, a bully, a liar, and just a generally mean-spirited person. Additionally, she is grossly ignorant about how government works, about history, about religion, and about world affairs.

Reading these two books leaves little doubt that the US is quite lucky, indeed, to have escaped this bumpkin's being elected to the office of vice-president. Little in life is scarier than the notion of Sarah Palin being second-in-line for the presidency.

esmepie says

I'm so embarrassed/ ashamed I read this and that's all I'm going to say.

Jim says

Joe McGinniss, whose *Fatal Vision* was a masterpiece of true crime writing, has written a compulsively readable book about the phenomenon known as Sarah Palin and about the phenomenal shift between admiring statesmen (and women) and worshipping at the altar of personality, where "presidential" no longer means anything than being a good drinking buddy. None of Palin's acolytes will like this book, but for those of us who only knew her as a face and a name and a public whirlwind, this is an extraordinary and revelatory work, and a real page-turner, at that.
