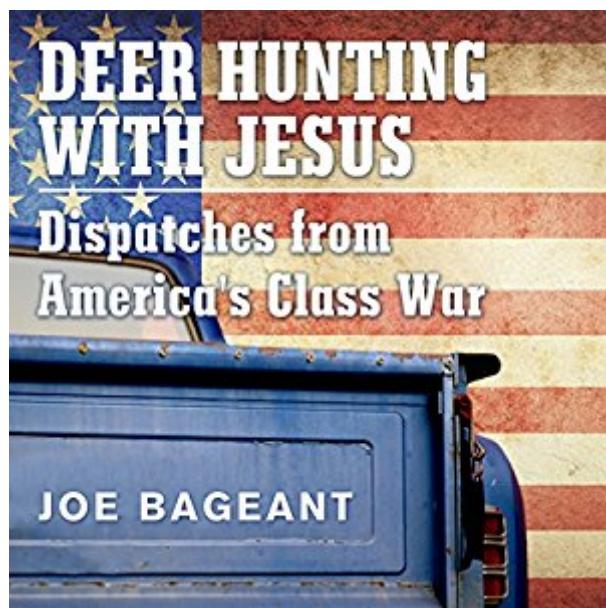


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# Deer Hunting With Jesus: Dispatches From America's Class War



## Synopsis

After 30 years spent scratching together a middle-class life out of a "dirt poor" childhood, Joe Bageant moved back to his hometown of Winchester, Virginia, where he realized that his family and neighbors were the very people who carried George W. Bush to victory. That was ironic, because Winchester, like countless American small towns, is fast becoming the bedrock of a permanent underclass. Two in five of the people in his old neighborhood do not have high-school diplomas. Nearly everyone over 50 has serious health problems, and many have no health care. Credit ratings are low or nonexistent, and alcohol, overeating, and Jesus are the preferred avenues of escape. A raucous mix of storytelling and political commentary, *Deer Hunting with Jesus* is Bageant's report on what he learned by coming home. He writes of his childhood friends who work at factory jobs that are constantly on the verge of being outsourced; the mortgage and credit-card rackets that saddle the working poor with debt, i.e., "white trashonomics"; the ubiquitous gun culture - and why the left doesn't get it; Scots Irish culture and how it played out in the young life of Lynddie England; and the blinkered "magical thinking" of the Christian right. (Bageant's brother is a Baptist pastor who casts out demons.) What it all adds up to, he asserts, is an unacknowledged class war. By turns brutal, tender, incendiary, and seriously funny, this book is a call to arms for fellow progressives with little real understanding of "the great beery, NASCAR-loving, church-going, gun-owning America that has never set foot in a Starbucks". *Deer Hunting with Jesus* is a potent antidote to what Bageant dubs "the American hologram" - the televised, corporatized virtual reality that distracts us from the insidious realities of American life.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I don't like giving 5 star ratings for books unless they are true masterpieces and will this one is close it has its issues. This book is quite unique and it is an insiders opinion piece but it is clearly an influential book. Its a very accessible read, which provides a great deal of commentary on the situation within the heartland of America. As an Australian, who used to live in the USA, but has since returned to my homeland in Australia, I left somewhat perplexed by the people who live in these areas. I have met Americas in these places who still think WW2 is going on - I kid you not, have had endless debates with them over guns, their definition of freedom, shared in their meals and home life all why they believe I came from a far away land somewhere near England, and as for American Christianity, well...as Joe says it's like playing Dungeons and Dragons. But what to make of these experiences, how can an Australian piece this together? Well, without spoiling the picture that Joe paints, this book goes a long way to helping with that question. I received the Australian Kindle version which includes an introduction tailored for down under but the main text is unaltered. Joe is clearly a learned man, but he doesn't write this in an Academic way however he retains depth and insight without have to render the terminology such as neo-liberalism, fundamentalism, free market economics and such, but presents it from the point of view of how someone sees these ideas as gospel and they arrive at this from an everyday point of view. In the end he provides no solutions to the problems that the protestant experiment has brought about, but in his defense, no one has any solutions. The achievement of this book is to give a language to describe how religion, economics, and America's particular definition of freedom and all intertwined and live. I tip my hat off to the man. A fine achievement.

Even though it was written a while back, this book is as current as ever to try and understand the lives and motivations of people living in small town America. The author is from a small town himself, before he was able to attend college thanks to a visionary government program and then came back. This results in a very personal perspective where he is able to use a gentle tone and provide personal examples. I wouldn't be surprised if Bernie Sanders had read this book to inform when developing his inclusive politics, sensitive to the needs of all Americans. A quick read, written in a witty style, and very relevant in this tumultuous election. I recommend it to all my friends.

The author has captured working class, middle America like no one else. I live in the decaying

remnant of a small town known for producing Eugene V. Debs and Theodore Dreiser. Today we are best known for political ineptitude and incestuous corruption. Reading this book has helped me understand why--functional illiteracy and immersion in the corporate hologram are, at least, first approximations of the underlying causes. Progressives who want to make a difference should forego their lattes and spend some time getting to know their neighbors before we are caught up in the "coming economic and ecological collapse."

I agree with the reviewer who wrote that Deer Hunting With Jesus is chilling and dead-on accurate. The same goes for Rainbow Pie by Joe Bageant. We are enslaved by corporations who own our government and own and enslave us as we go blindly to the malls and WalMart to buy useless crap that will never make us happy or give substance to our pathetic lives. Bageant writes about poor and middle class whites, but also poor blacks and Hispanics. I realize that blacks and Hispanics are activists, but, in Bageant's term, whites are "taking it in the shorts" from their corporate masters and not doing anything about it. We are in the 2016 political primaries right now and after reading these two books, I can see right through the lies the candidates are telling us. Only Bernie Sanders is speaking the truth to us about how we must have free education to educate Americans. We must have real universal one-payer health care insurance, not Obamacare written by the greedy medical insurance companies. I don't think many Americans can understand the truth because they are brainwashed by tv owned by big corporations who own us.

A very interesting view of a large group of US citizens that seem to have intransigent views on major issues in this country - guns, welfare, healthcare and more, as told by a person who changed his previous right wing views after he went to college. His old group frequently made decisions that were contrary to their own well being, and now I better understand why.

This book, published a decade ago, was prescient in its prediction of the financial meltdown of 2008-9 and shows how the way was paved for the ascendency of Donald Trump. The tone is cynical, but the author knows whereof he speaks. An insider's take on white working class culture.

Just freaking stunning. Insightful, eloquent and compassionate, Joe Bageant truly understands the 'common (wo)man' in the American sense, and brings that person to life in a way that does not diminish or scold. He puts before you a face of 'Merica' that most people never see, and probably go out of their way to avoid seeing it. If you're content to stay in blissful ignorance, don't read this book.

If however you want to understand the Trump phenomenon, then don't wait!

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