

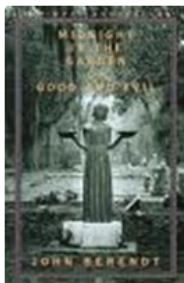


# From Book to Box Office

## (Some) Nonfiction Books Made Into Films

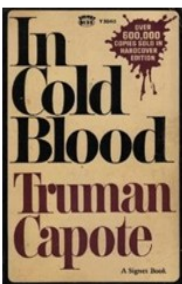


### **Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil by John Berendt (975.8 BEREN)**



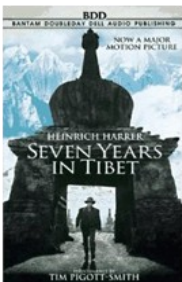
John Berendt's *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* has been heralded as a "lyrical work of nonfiction," and the book's extremely graceful prose depictions of some of Savannah, Georgia's most colorful eccentrics--remarkable characters who could have once prospered in a William Faulkner novel or Eudora Welty short story--were certainly a critical factor in its tremendous success. (One resident into whose orbit Berendt fell, the Lady Chablis, went on to become a minor celebrity in her own right.) But equally important was Berendt's depiction of Savannah socialite Jim Williams as he stands trial for the murder of Danny Hansford, a moody, violence-prone hustler--and sometime companion to Williams--characterized by locals as a "walking streak of sex." So feel free to call it a "true crime classic" without a trace of shame.

### **In Cold Blood by Truman Capote (364.1 CAPOT)**



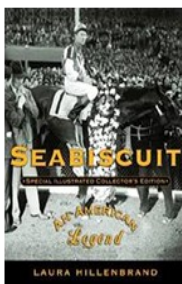
Controversial and compelling, "In Cold Blood" reconstructs the murder in 1959 of a Kansas farmer, his wife and both their children. Truman Capote's comprehensive study of the killings and subsequent investigation explores the circumstances surrounding this terrible crime and the effect it had on those involved. At the centre of his study are the amoral young killers Perry Smith and Dick Hickcock, who, vividly drawn by Capote, are shown to be reprehensible yet entirely and frighteningly human. The book that made Capote's name, *In Cold Blood* is a seminal work of modern prose, a remarkable synthesis of journalistic skill and powerfully evocative narrative.

### **Seven Years in Tibet by Heinrich Harrer (951 HARR)**



Originally published in 1953, this adventure classic recounts Austrian mountaineer Heinrich Harrer's 1943 escape from a British internment camp in India, his daring trek across the Himalayas, and his happy sojourn in Tibet, then, as now, a remote land little visited by foreigners. Warmly welcomed, he eventually became tutor to the Dalai Lama, teenaged god-king of the theocratic nation. The author's vivid descriptions of Tibetan rites and customs capture its unique traditions before the Chinese invasion in 1950, which prompted Harrer's departure. A 1996 epilogue details the genocidal havoc wrought over the past half-century.

### **Seabiscuit: An American Legend by Laura Hillenbrand (798.4 HILLE)**



There have been numerous biographies of famous horses, but this one is the best by open lengths, partly because Hillenbrand expands the scope of her project to include owner Charles Howard, trainer Tom Smith, and jockey Red Pollard, whose boom-and-bust and boom-again careers are fascinating in themselves. But *Seabiscuit's* rags-to-riches story is unparalleled in a sport known for its longshots. A nondescript little bay, *Seabiscuit* ran 50 races without distinction on the lowest rungs of racing's class ladder before dominating the sport in the late 1930s, when he reached a level of popularity that is utterly inconceivable today. Hillenbrand's detailed and dramatic re-creation of *Seabiscuit's* life and times is a remarkable testament to what four years of meticulous research and a writer's gift for storytelling can accomplish. And it's mighty good reading, even if you're



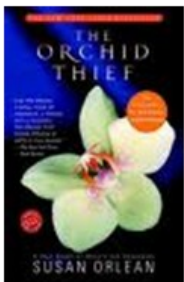
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### **Girl, Interrupted by Susanna Kaysen (616.89 KAYSÉN)**

When reality got "too dense" for 18-year-old Susanna Kaysen, she was hospitalized. It was 1967, and reality was too dense for many people. But few who are labeled mad and locked up for refusing to stick to an agreed-upon reality possess Kaysen's lucidity in sorting out a maelstrom of contrary perceptions. Her observations about hospital life are deftly rendered; often darkly funny. Her clarity about the complex province of brain and mind, of neuro-chemical activity and something more, make this book of brief essays an exquisite challenge to conventional thinking about what is normal and what is deviant.



### **The Orchid Thief by Susan Orlean (364.1 ORLEAN)**

A modern classic of personal journalism, *The Orchid Thief* is Susan Orlean's wickedly funny, elegant, and captivating tale of an amazing obsession. From Florida's swamps to its courtrooms, the *New Yorker* writer follows one deeply eccentric and oddly attractive man's possibly criminal pursuit of an endangered flower. Determined to clone the rare ghost orchid, *Polyrrhiza lindenii*, John Laroche leads Orlean on an unforgettable tour of America's strange flower-selling subculture, along with the Seminole Indians who help him and the forces of justice who fight him. In the end, Orlean—and the reader—will have more respect for underdog determination and a powerful new definition of passion.



### **Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side of the All-American Meal by Eric Schlosser (641 SCHLO)**

On any given day, one out of four Americans opts for a quick and cheap meal at a fast-food restaurant, without giving either its speed or its thriftiness a second thought. Fast food is so ubiquitous that it now seems as American, and harmless, as apple pie. But the industry's drive for consolidation, homogenization, and speed has radically transformed America's diet, landscape, economy, and workforce, often in insidiously destructive ways. Eric Schlosser, an award-winning journalist, opens his ambitious and ultimately devastating exposé with an introduction to the iconoclasts and high school dropouts, such as Harlan Sanders and the McDonald brothers, who first applied the principles of a factory assembly line to a commercial kitchen. Quickly, however, he moves behind the counter with the overworked and underpaid teenage workers, onto the factory farms where the potatoes and beef are grown, and into the slaughterhouses run by giant meatpacking corporations. Schlosser wants you to know why those French fries taste so good (with a visit to the world's largest flavor company) and "what really lurks between those sesame-seed buns." Eater beware: forget your concerns about cholesterol, there is--literally--feces in your meat.



### **Into the Wild by Jon Krakauer (B MCCANDLE)**

After graduating from Emory University in Atlanta in 1992, top student and athlete Christopher McCandless abandoned his possessions, gave his entire \$24,000 savings account to charity and hitchhiked to Alaska, where he went to live in the wilderness. Four months later, he turned up dead. His diary, letters and two notes found at a remote campsite tell of his desperate effort to survive, apparently stranded by an injury and slowly starving. They also reflect the posturing of a confused young man, raised in affluent Annandale, Va., who self-consciously adopted a Tolstoyan renunciation of wealth and return to nature. Krakauer, a contributing editor to *Outside* and *Men's Journal*, retraces McCandless's ill-fated antagonism toward his father, Walt, an eminent aerospace engineer.