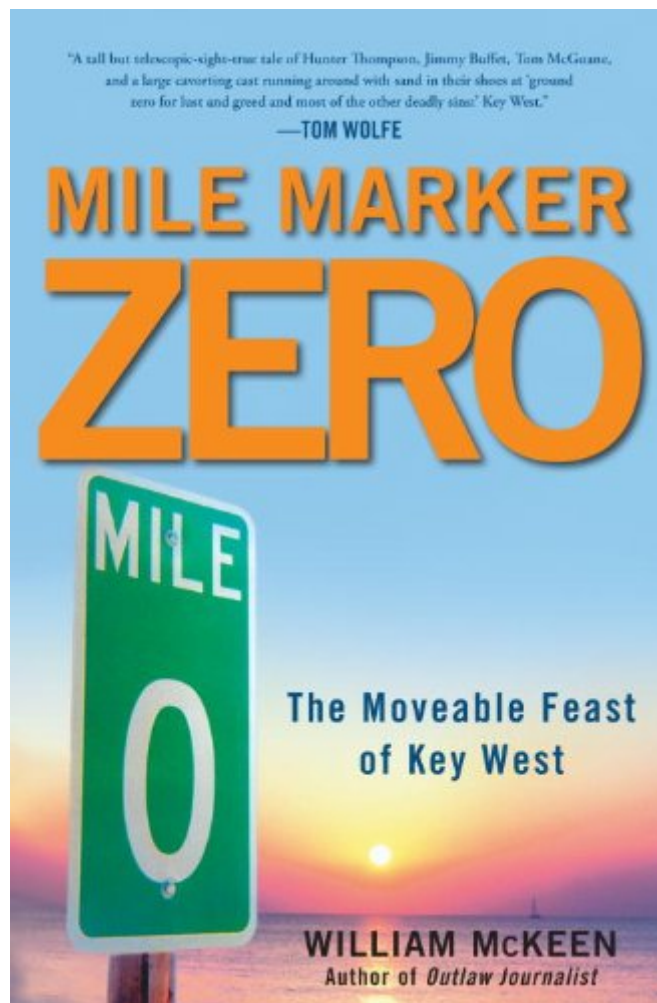




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Mile Marker Zero: The Moveable Feast Of Key West



Synopsis

True tales of writers and pirates, painters and potheads, guitar pickers and drug merchants in America's southernmost city. For Hemingway and Fitzgerald, there was Paris in the twenties. For others, later, there was Greenwich Village, Big Sur, and Woodstock. But for an even later generation—one defined by the likes of Jimmy Buffett, Tom McGuane, and Hunter S. Thompson—there was another moveable feast: Key West, Florida. The small town on the two-by-four-mile island has long been an artistic haven, a wild refuge for people of all persuasions, and the inspirational home for a league of great American writers. Some of the artists went there to be literary he-men. Some went to re-create themselves. Others just went to disappear—and succeeded. No matter what inspired the trip, Key West in the seventies was the right place at the right time, where and when an astonishing collection of artists wove a web of creative inspiration. Mile Marker Zero tells the story of how these writers and artists found their identities in Key West and maintained their friendships over the decades, despite oceans of booze and boatloads of pot, through serial marriages and sexual escapades, in that dangerous paradise. Unlike the "Lost Generation" of Paris in the twenties, we have a generation that invented, reinvented, and found itself at the unending cocktail party at the end—and the beginning—of America's highway. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

An encyclopedic history of Key West from the early Jimmy buffet era to the present. Can't imagine the amount of time the author spent diagramming .all the mate swapping of his artistic friends. Perhaps a stuffier reviewer would describe the women as easy going sluts and their mates as striving writers and inept drug smugglersBy his definition marijuana smugglers are good old boys and coke smugglers are evil. Well the Colombians are evil, the Key West distributors are still good old bots necessarily wreaking havoc with the poison in order to finance their artistic vision.The fact that the community and it's governmental structure was viewed as totally corrupt is given a lpass.

Upon finishing William McKeen's "Mile Maker Zero," I headed to my computer and started looking for flights to Key West. It's a gift when an author has the ability to drop you smack into a place during a period of time and McKeen wields this magic throughout as he writes of interesting times in an amazing place. I truly felt I was belly up at the Half Shell with Jim Harrison, dodging with Tom McGuane as we ducked furniture thrown by Elizabeth Ashley, watching sunrise with Jimmy Buffet, and shaking my head in amazement as Hunter S. Thompson is holding court with cocktail in one hand and joint in the other. When creative types descend on a destination and make it their own, chaos and legend often ensues. McKeen filters the lies as he explains the lure of a small island town and its inspiration on some of 20th century America's artistic greats. Don't be surprised if, when the journey of "Mile Marker Zero" is over, you find yourself sipping Havana Club on ice and hoping Margot Kidder stops by in a bikini top and cutoffs.

I arrived in Florida in the early 80's from California and decided to head down to Key West with my wife just to check out that portion of our new state. We loved it - party town! From the sunset watch at Mallory Square to the drunken revelry at the local jazz spots it was great. We stayed at a funky hotel near the Southernmost Point for a bit under \$40 a night. (Same spot now closer to \$240 with 3 night minimum during major party times like Fantasy Fest, New Years or the Hemingway look alike competition.) Food was great with lots of options and party times on Duval street were crazy. Yes, body paint was all some were wearing. Not unusual to stumble back in the early a.m. to find a couple making love on the end of one pier and a nude drunk nearby on another whizzing into the

ocean. Turns out it was even rowdier (hard to imagine) during the few years before when writers like Tom Corcoran, Thomas McGuane and Hunter Thompson were around, mixing with folks like Peter Fonda and Margot Kidder, Truman Capote and Tennessee Williams. Of course, one of the best stories was the rise of Jimmy Buffett and all the happenings around him. (Ever wondered about his T shirt that said "Where is Bum Farto?" Book doesn't answer the question but at least you will know where it came from.) They have all moved on. Some to Alabama, some to Montana, etc. but the legacy remains and this book does a great job of catching the spirit. Now of course, the place has been cleaned up, the tourists pile in, the prices are up dramatically and major "yuppie conversion" has occurred upon places that once had great character. Still, if you want a sense of what it was like and frankly, some of that spirit lives on, this book is a great tour guide.

Imagine my surprise when the book started out with my friend Tom Corcoran landing in Key West. I was even more surprised to learn that he was called the "Taco Man" on the island. My Kindle says I'm only 33% through the book, and already it's the best book about Key West I've ever read. This book, and Jimmy Buffett: The Key West Years by Tom Corcoran will become the bookends of my Buffett Book Collection. I can't even wait to finish it to write my review. That's how bad I want to be the first to turn my Parrot Head Friends on to this book! This is the book we thought Jimmy would some day write. Learn all about the early "Boogie" dazes of Key West and Ernest Hemingway and Tennessee Williams. Learn all about the people the streets you've been riding your Red Bike up and down all these years and the stories about the men they were named after. Learn more about one of our favorite Key West authors, and Jimmy's good buddy, Tom Corcoran. Meet Jimmy's brother-in-law, Thomas McGuane. Meet his drinking buddies Jim Harrison and Vaughn Cochran. Learn the complete story about Jerry Jeff Walker introducing Jimmy to the Keys. I've been a Jimmy Buffett/Parrothead Historian for years. I even wrote a book about Parrotheads and the Internet JimmyDOTcom : The Evolution of a Phan. This book has instantly increased my Key West/Jimmy Buffett Knowledge an easy Ten-Fold! In fact, I've been hired to write a book called "Jimmy Buffett FAQ," and "Mile Marker Zero" has become my most important piece of research material. And even though I have a Kindle version, tonight I bought the Hardback (it's on sale folks) just so I could see how many of the people mentioned in the book I could get to autograph it. I know "Papa" and "Captain Tony" are no longer available...But that still leaves author William McKeen, Jim, Jerry Jeff, Tom, Thomas, Vaughn and many more. I can't wait to finish the book and write a "Complete" Review. This will become one of the most favorite pieces of Parrotphania a Parrot Head could own. Nice Job Bill...

Realigned me w/ my inner-outer Parrothead during the long cold Minnesota winter of '13/'14 (a winter that's pretty much still going btw). I love you Jimmy! Turned me on to Hemmingway (and McGuane (and the other guys pretty soon here too)). Painted an intimate and spanning picture of a place I was intrigued by but knew little about. Felt like a vacation, and likely inspired a vacation yet to be. Nicely chopped up a variety of uniquely intertwining stories. Did I forget about Gonzo? Well I shouldn't have. And now I feel like I know him just a little bit more. Con: Man was I feelin' envious of all those guys and their time & place. Thank you Mr. McKeen.

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