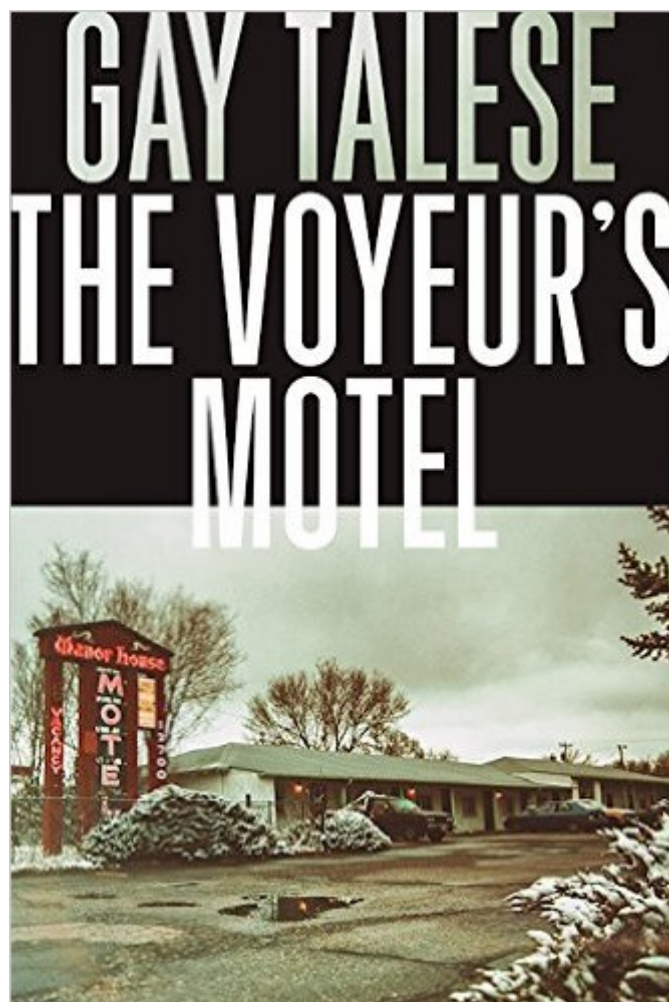


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# The Voyeur's Motel



## Synopsis

On January 7, 1980, in the run-up to the publication of his landmark bestseller *Thy Neighbor's Wife*, Gay Talese received an anonymous letter from a man in Colorado. "Since learning of your long awaited study of coast-to-coast sex in America," the letter began, "I feel I have important information that I could contribute to its contents or to contents of a future book." The man went on to tell Talese an astonishing secret, that he had bought a motel to satisfy his voyeuristic desires. He had built an attic observation platform, fitted with vents, through which he could peer down on his unwitting guests. Unsure what to make of this confession, Talese traveled to Colorado where he met the man; Gerald Foos; verified his story in person, and read some of his extensive journals, a secret record of America's changing social and sexual mores. But because Foos insisted on remaining anonymous, Talese filed his reporting away, assuming the story would remain untold. Now, after thirty-five years, he's ready to go public and Talese can finally tell his story. *The Voyeur's Motel* is an extraordinary work of narrative journalism, and one of the most talked about books of the year.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 240 pages

Publisher: Grove Press (July 12, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0802125816

ISBN-13: 978-0802125811

Product Dimensions: 5.4 x 1 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.1 out of 5 stars See all reviews (38 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #22,439 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in Books > Travel > United States > Colorado > Denver #10 in Books > Business & Money > Industries > Service #31 in Books > Medical Books > Psychology > Sexuality

## Customer Reviews

Gay Talese doesn't have a cold, but he is badly slipping. This is a book that never should have been written by a major author, let alone published by a major publishing house. It is well beneath Talese's previous works of narrative nonfiction. It is a story that held up at magazine length, but not at book length. It is a lazy use of the author's talents. He gives over at least one-third of the book (maybe more) to the ramblings from the journal of his voyeur subject, who is no Gay Talese when it

comes to writing. After a few pages, enough is enough. Also, the research raised some serious questions. For starters, Talese admits that property records show the man didn't buy the motel until three years AFTER he said he started looking through ceiling peepholes. Talese passes over that as if it doesn't matter. It DOES matter. Also, Talese could not nail down that the murder the voyeur claimed to have witnessed in one room even happened! None of the police agencies had a homicide case for that date, open or closed. Hello! Aren't these some red flags waving that should have made Talese question the validity of the voyeur's story? Finally, this guy admits he wants publicity to help sell his multi-million sports card collection. That's called motive; motive to deceive. Still, Talese plowed on, telling this guy's questionable story that even if it was all true got very uninteresting; enough to ruin some damn fine fantasies. In short, this is the story about a Voyeur Masturbator told by a once huge talent who has sadly become a Literary Masturbator.

If you read the New Yorker article, you already got 90% of the story. It's basically a repetitive version of that article with a few additional anecdotes sprinkled in. I was hoping for a more thorough exploration of Foos' psychology as well as some additional historical and social context, but they were nowhere to be found. Avoid.

This is obviously a minority opinion but I rather liked this book. The "voyeur" is a creepy guy and his attempt to make his observations sound like serious sexual research are unconvincing. His interests are prurient. However, he often makes somewhat astute comments about the people he observes. That doesn't redeem him in any way but it does make for some interesting reading. There are some discrepancies in his story but it rings true on the whole. I also found no reason to be critical of Mr. Talese's conduct. His actions were appropriate for a journalist.

This a very interesting book. For those of us growing up in the 50s, a decade Mary Roach ("Bonk") claims was the most sexually repressed decade of the 20th century, it was fascinating to hear about the terrible effects of ignorance and religion on people's sexual enjoyment. The main quibble about the story is that there is some doubt as to its complete veracity. This has caused much controversy, but if you accept the care Talese takes to tell the story and consider the excruciating detail of the voyeur, it is hard to discount the whole thing. Well written journalism about a kinky topic.

I'm not sure why all the low ratings, I downloaded it on Audible and found it to be a fascinating story. The way he kept notes in a clinical fashion feeling as though what he was doing was a study yet

feeding his on tendencies. You have to wonder how many hotels are like this? I'm sure more than I care to realize.

Surprised by the clinical if not boring explanations of something I thought would be more.

Provoking.. Pushing my way thru but nothing stimulating here at all. I'm surprised gaytalese ,put this out...

I enjoyed the book especially since I am a native of Colorado and familiar with several of the geographical references in the book. Before the book the author repudiated the book and then backed off of his repudiation, which makes me wonder about the authenticity of portions of the book.

I loved the content of the book, but I was surprised at what a boring writer Talese is. Perhaps this is meant to be a work of journalism, but there are plenty of journalists who could make real art from this subject matter. In this Talese fails. Aside from that, I'm definitely happy to have read it; it documents a phenomenon many of us suspected all along, and evidence today suggests voyeurism is easier than ever and is not going away. Some of the moral arguments are at least brought to the fore.

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