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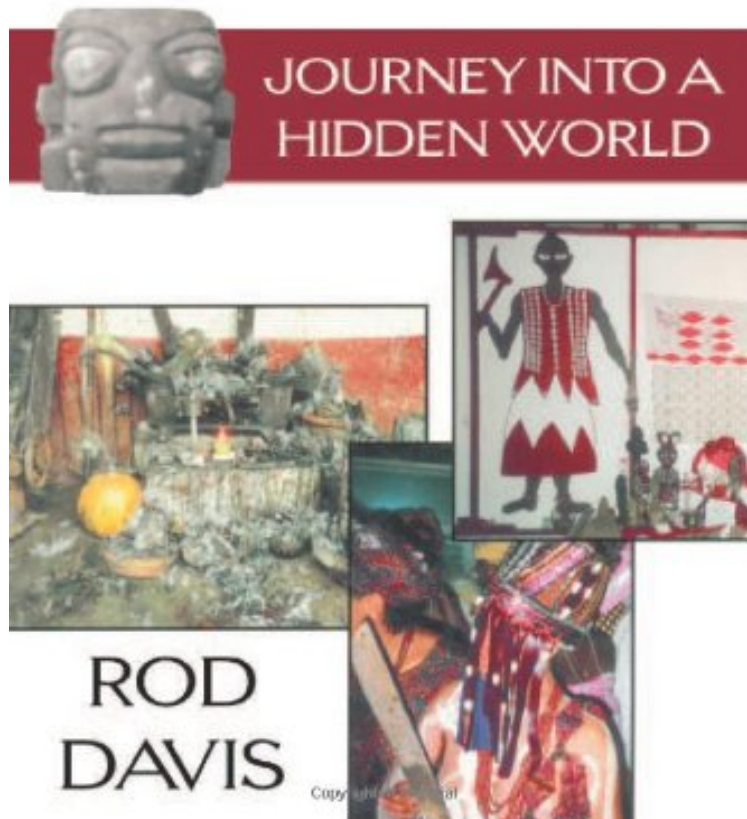
American Voudou: Journey into a Hidden World

Rod Davis

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AMERICAN VOUDOU



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Rod Davis : American Voudou: Journey into a Hidden World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised American Voudou: Journey into a Hidden World:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Couldn't put it downBy TTazman64This story of Rod Davis' journey is impossible to put down. I envy his experience.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Super EnjoyableBy James L. NammackThis book is about Rod Davis's personal experiences as he drove throughout the South in search of people for whom Voudou was an important part of their lives. Davis writes extremely well, and so this book should be

an interesting and enjoyable read for more or less anyone. In his relentless search for what American Voodoo is all about, Davis deepened his understanding of it, and as he got deeper into it, much of the spookiness of Voodoo also dissipated. He writes about American Voodoo from the perspective of one who is deeply moved by it, and who realizes that Voodoo has more depth and substance to it than most people realize. While being sympathetic to it and its practitioners, he does not lose his objectivity. Somehow, Davis is able to combine his personal subjectivity with professional objectivity in a highly engaging way. This book is filled with insightful information, and I feel more enlightened for having read it. For me, it was a fulfilling book to read. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great Job Rod Davis By kdI used this book as a reference for a graduate level research paper focusing on Ishmael Reed's Mumbo Jumbo. Davis provided me with exactly the detailed information I was looking for, and I enjoyed reading about his adventures in the little-known world of Voodoo in America. I highly recommend this book to any and all who are curious about Voodoo, Hoodoo, Voudou, Vodun, or whatever other name you may have for this religion that originated with the blacks who came from Africa.

Voudou (an older spelling of voodoo) a pantheistic belief system developed in West Africa and transported to the Americas during the diaspora of the slave trade is the generic term for a number of similar African religions which mutated in the Americas, including santeria, candomble, macumbe, obeah, Shango Baptist, etc. Since its violent introduction in the Caribbean islands, it has been the least understood and most feared religion of the New World, suppressed, outlawed or ridiculed from Haiti to Hattiesburg. Yet with the exception of Zora Neale Hurston's accounts more than a half-century ago and a smattering of lurid, often racist paperbacks, studies of this potent West African theology have focused almost exclusively on Haiti, Cuba and the Caribbean basin. American Voodoo turns our gaze back to American shores, principally towards the South, the most important and enduring stronghold of the voodoo faith in America and site of its historic yet rarely recounted war with Christianity. This chronicle of Davis's determined search for the true legacy of voodoo in America reveals a spirit-world from New Orleans to Miami which will shatter long-held stereotypes about the religion and its role in our culture. The real-life dramas of the practitioners, true believers and skeptics of the voodoo world also offer a radically different entree into a half-hidden, half-mythical South, and by extension into an alternate soul of America. Readers interested in the dynamic relationships between religion and society, and in the choices made by people caught in the flux of conflict, will be heartened by this unique story of survival and even renaissance of what may have been the most persecuted religion in American history. Traveling on a criss-cross route from New Orleans across the slave-belt states of Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia, dipping down to Miami where the voodoo of Cuba and the Caribbean is endemic, and up to New York where priests and practitioners increase each year, Rod Davis determined to find out what happened to voodoo in the United States. A fascinating and insightful account of a little known and often misunderstood aspect of African-American culture, American Voodoo details the author's own personal experiences within this system of belief and ritual, along with descriptions and experiences of other people, ranging from those who reject it entirely to ardent practitioners and leaders. Davis also places voodoo in a broad context of American cultural history, from slavery to the Civil Rights Movement, and from Elvis to New Age. Current interest in voodoo is related, in part, to the arrival of large numbers of people into the United States from the Caribbean, especially Cuba. Blacks in that country were able to maintain the African religion in a syncretic form, known as santeria. The tensions that have arisen between Cubans and African Americans over both the leadership and the belief system of the religion is discussed. Davis raises questions and offers insight into the nature of religion, American culture, and race relations. The book contains an extensive bibliography for further reading and a glossary of voodoo terms for readers unfamiliar with the subject.

From Library Journal Davis, senior editor of Cooking Light magazine, documents a five-year journey into the world of voodoo in the American South, specifically New Orleans, Miami, Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Voodoo is a largely misunderstood religion adapted from West African worship during the diaspora of slavery; this book is a chronicle of personal experience, observation, and reflection. Davis provides a view of a world hidden and protected from outsiders. The result is not a comprehensive study but a narrower appreciation of the way voodoo is practiced in parts of the Southern United States, including an important discussion of sacrifice. Engagingly written, the book includes a very helpful glossary and bibliography as well as two appendixes on voodoo in the media and the history of the religion. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries. ?Gail Wood, SUNY Coll. of Technology Lib., Cortland Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. P { margin-bottom: 0.08in; } The Times-Picayune, April 30, 2000 "In his impressive new book... Davis searches for the remnants of this West African religion in America. The result is a valuable work, with the author describing his own delicate balance of faith and skepticism about voodoo... It is a compelling vision in a compelling book." National Geographic Traveler, April 1999 "Explore the backroads of a mysterious African religion as it conforms to and conflicts with Western sensibilities in American Voodoo." Africana.com, online, May 1999 P { margin-bottom: 0.08in; } "With American Voodoo, Davis has created a valuable resource for black Americans interested in learning about Voodoo and its suppression in America, shedding light on an important aspect of black history." Choice, July/August 1999 "Journalist Davis's account of the varieties of

American Voodoo is a brilliant tour de force, a "must read" for students of African American religion...Highly recommended for all levels of readers, from the general public to specialists in the field."Library Journal, November 15, 1998"Davis provides a view of a world hidden and protected from outsiders...Engagingly written, the book includes a very helpful glossary and bibliography as well as two appendices on voodoo in the media and the history of the religion. Highly recommended for public and academic libraries."The Texas Observer, September 15, 2000 P { margin-bottom: 0.08in; }"American Voodoo is a marvelous road trip and a fascinating and painstaking piece of research. Davis, with persistence, preparation, and an amazing ability to inspire trust and confidence, takes us places few of us will ever go, and shows us a shadowy and fiercely defiant subculture whose rituals and beliefs--and sacrifices--outlasted all the considerable ammunition white Southerners could throw at them under the rule of slavery and beyond."The Midwest Book , December 1998P { margin-bottom: 0.08in; } "This chronicle reveals the true legacy of voodoo in America from New Orleans to Miami, and shatters long-held stereotypes about the religion and its role in the American culture."Bookman Book Syndicate, January 20, 1999Selected as one of "The Exceptional Books of 1998," a group of 200 books from a field of 25,000, based on the five Bookman review publications.From the PublisherAmerican Voodoo was recently chosen as one of the exceptional books of 1998 by the publications The A List, Library Booknotes and Bookman. The books chosen for this award are the top 200 in a field of 25,000, according to Bookman Syndicate. We are very proud to have a book of this calibre in our spring list and we congratulate Rod Davis on his achievement. Mr. Davis is an award-winning journalist and magazine editor who has taught writing at the University of Texas at Austin and Southern Methodist University in Dallas. A fifth-generation Texan, he has lived most of his life in Texas and the South, currently residing in Birmingham, Alabama, where he is senior editor of Cooking Light, a Time, Inc. magazine.