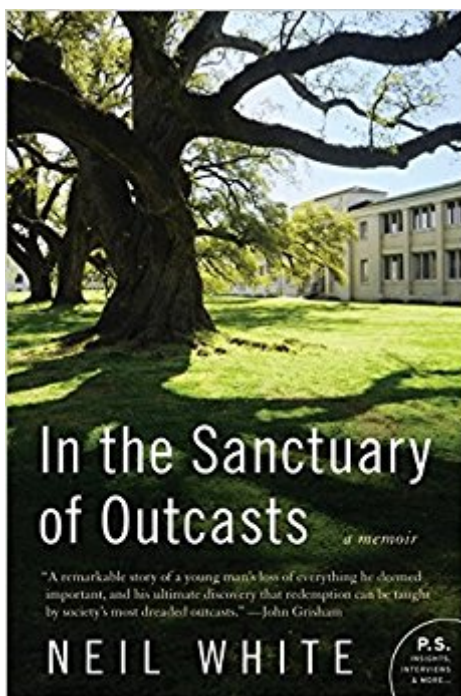


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In The Sanctuary Of Outcasts: A Memoir (P.S.)



Synopsis

"A remarkable story of a young man's loss of everything he deemed important, and his ultimate discovery that redemption can be taught by society's most dreaded outcasts." —John Grisham "Hilarious, astonishing, and deeply moving." —John Berendt, author of *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil* The emotional, incredible true story of Neil White, a man who discovers the secret to happiness, leading a fulfilling life, and the importance of fatherhood in the most unlikely of places—the last leper colony in the continental United States. In the words of Pulitzer Prize winner Robert Olen Butler (*A Good Scent from a Strange Mountain*), White is "a splendid writer" and *In the Sanctuary of Outcasts* "a book that will endure."

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Following conviction for bank fraud, White spent a year in a minimum-security prison in Carville, La., housed in the last leper colony in mainland America. His fascinating memoir reflects on the sizable group of lepers living alongside the prisoners, social outcasts among the motley inmate crew of drug dealers, mob types and killers. Narrating in colorful, entertaining snapshots, White introduces the reader to an excellent supporting cast in his imprisonment: Father Reynolds, the peerless spiritual monk; Mr. Flowers, the no-nonsense case manager; Anne, the sorrowful mother with leprosy whose baby was taken from her arms; and Ella the Earth Mother, with wisdom to spare. Brisk, ironic and

perceptive, White's introspective memoir puts a magnifying glass to a flawed life, revealing that all of life is to be savored and respected. (June) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Starred Review White was a successful magazine publisher in 1993 when he was convicted of fraud and check kiting and sentenced to prison in Carville, Louisiana. He knew he was facing 18 months without his wife and two young children; he knew his enormous ego and ambition had landed him in prison; he knew he had to figure out a way to save his marriage and somehow rebound financially. What he didn't know was that the isolated 100-year-old facility at Carville was home to a leper colony of 130 patients. He learned that the patients (some severely disfigured and disabled) and the 250 inmates eyed each other suspiciously across the corridors and breezeway, each thinking the other was the scourge of the earth. Because his work detail brought him into frequent contact with the patients, White developed strong relationships with them. His favorite was Ella, a dignified and beatific elderly black woman, who had lived at Carville for more than 50 years. Among the inmates, White encountered counterfeiters and tax evaders along with drug traffickers and carjackers. When the Bureau of Prisons decided to evict the leprosy patients, tensions built on both sides. White, near the end of his sentence and struggling to come to grips with the consequences of his crime, is caught in the middle. He offers a memoir of personal transformation and a thoroughly engaging look at the social, economic, racial, and other barriers that separate individuals that harden, dissolve, and reconfigure themselves when people are involuntarily thrust together over long periods. --Vanessa Bush --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This is not a difficult book to read, but it contains a plethora of life lessons. It also is a history of how people with Hansen's disease were treated because we were so ignorant of what caused it. It does humble me to realize that as a group, humans have not advanced much in our reactions to the unknown. This book is well-written, and, oddly enough, quite uplifting. I would highly recommend it. It is a book worth reading.

I expected this book to be more about the relationships between the inmates and the patients and the ways in which the inmates provided services to the patients and less about the author, who seems to have a profoundly huge ego. Truth be told, I'm not finished reading the book yet. I nearly

put it down 1/3 of the way through because of the repetition of thoughts and events, but made myself continue. Now that the author is learning about himself and will, hopefully, make some changes in his thinking and attitudes, I'm curious enough to find out if that does, in fact, happen. This is a book I'm reading to my husband while we drive and sometimes our daughter is in the car with us, so reading Link's disgusting language becomes challenging. Surely there would have been a way around that - using *** or bleep-bleep or something.

In the Sanctuary of Outcasts follows the story of Neil White, the author, as he retells his experience while in prison for one year. Neil was a wealthy magazine publisher with a beautiful wife, two kids, and everything in life that he thought he needed. Imprisoned for kiting checks for his business, Neil has to face the harsh reality of living in confinement among not only other convicts, but also with the greatest of the outcasts: lepers. Neil keeps to himself while in the prison at first because of his fear of his new neighbors, but as time passes, he forms relationships with lepers and convicts alike that he would have never dreamed of. His relationships with the people in the prison change Neil, his overall outlook on life, as well as the other prisoners and lepers alike. This book exemplifies what it means to be part of a community in Catholic Social Teaching, whether in prison or in ordinary life. In the beginning Neil does everything the opposite of being in a community- not acknowledging people, judging people on their appearances, and other flaws shown by Neil. As Neil starts to talk with patients and prisoners and actually befriends them, he learns that they really aren't that different from himself. He starts to change little by little in his view of the people who once seemed so different from himself, and he realizes that appearances don't change a person, but it's their attitude that make people who they are. When he accepts others' differences, Neil accepts his own differences and starts to live life and treat other people the way people should do in a community, as described in the Catholic Social Teaching. I would absolutely recommend this book for everyone to read because of its great message of loving your neighbor and becoming an active part of your community to better yourself and those around you.

This was a thought-provoking book and also easy and pleasurable to read. The writer is sent to prison for check fraud. While there he meets an interesting cast of characters, including both inmates and patients (the prison shares space with a collection of Hansen's Disease patients). All are portrayed with warmth and humor but never in a patronizing manner. Over time, the author gains perspective on the superficial life he led outside and how his need to please others and

appear perfect led to his downfall and disgrace. This realization contrasts with the leprosy patients, most of whom have always been "imperfect" and have never had to worry about putting on a show for others or keeping up with the Joneses. White learns many lessons and comes out a better man.

In its basic form this is a story of one man's redemption. He falls from grace through no one else's fault but his own. He betrayed and hurt many of his friends and family in his downward spiral. He finds self forgiveness in the most unlikely of places-Carville. The home of both federal inmates and suffers of Hansen's Disease. His characters are both vivid and memorable. Well written and moving.

I was fascinated by Carville and it's history as a child. I read books about it and knew quite a bit of its history. This was in the 50s when it was still an active hospital. So finding this book was like revisiting a childhood place. To once again find Carville, this time through the eyes of a prisoner, was interesting and quite moving. Neil White has written about all the residents of a unique place. His own coming of age in prison is a result of his incarceration and I find myself admiring and liking him very much. The trip to the sanctuary of outcasts was worth a book in itself. But how much it is enriched by the addition of the environment of courage that Carville fosters in him.

When I discovered this book I was on one of my "learn all about it quests" which in this case was Leprosy(strange I know). I had read about Carville many years ago and thought that once they found a cure it would have closed. Instead it has been re-purposed and is now a minimum security prison. I felt no pity for Neil, after all he committed a crime so had to serve his time. What I enjoyed was his interactions with the long time residents who chose to stay there even after they were cured. I also discovered that one of the residents had written a book about her life as a leper(in 1950) and how she interacted with the new residents.

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