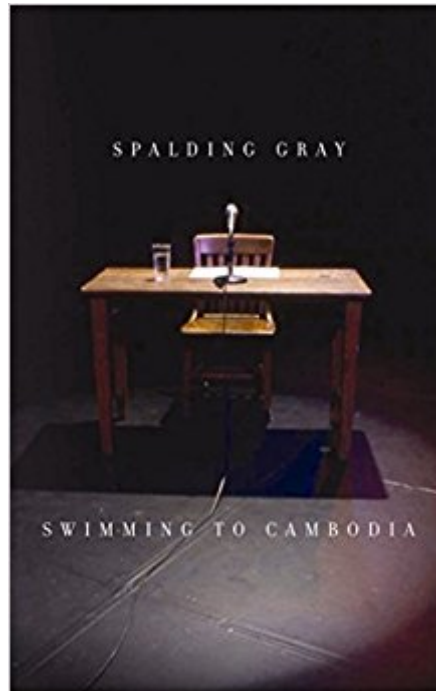




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Swimming To Cambodia



Synopsis

“It took courage to do what Spalding did—courage to make theatre so naked and unadorned, to expose himself in this way and fight the demons in public. In doing so, he entered our hearts—my heart—because he made his struggle my struggle. His life became my life.” —Eric Bogosian

Virtuosic. A master writer, reporter, comic and playwright. Spalding Gray is a sit-down monologist with the soul of a stand-up comedian. A contemporary Gulliver, he travels the globe in search of experience and finds the ridiculous.

“The New York Times

In 2004, we mourned the loss of one of America’s true theatrical innovators. Spalding Gray took his own life by jumping from the Staten Island ferry into the waters of New York Harbor, finally succumbing to the impossible notion that he could in fact swim to Cambodia. At a memorial gathering for family, friends and fans at Lincoln Center in New York, his widow expressed the need to honor Gray’s legacy as an artist and writer for his children, as well as for future generations of fans and readers.

Originally published in 1985, *Swimming to Cambodia* is reissued here 20 years later in a new edition as a tribute to Gray’s singular artistry.

Writer, actor and performer, Spalding Gray is the author of *Sex and Death to the Age 14*; *Monster in a Box*; *It’s a Slippery Slope*; *Gray’s Anatomy* and *Morning, Noon and Night*, among other works. His appearance in *The Killing Fields* was the inspiration for his *Swimming to Cambodia*, which was also filmed by Jonathan Demme.

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Customer Reviews

Spalding Gray was the author of numerous solo pieces including *Monster in a Box*; *It’s a Slippery*

Slope; Morning, Noon and Night, and Sex and Death to the Age of 14 and other pieces. He leaves behind a wife, two children of his own and a stepdaughter. He will be sorely missed.

For those not familiar with Spalding Gray, he was a theatric artist and story teller of the highest calibre. While he may be gone and saddly so, this is a rare opportunity to visit back to the off Broadway delights, often found in days past amongst the New York Village beat. It is a story of adventure and self awareness, with an ambitious live performance captured for the DVD viewer. While is would never compare to the being in the theater seats, it is a work of art of perfection, by an complicated man. It is his true account, told by his own interpretation. It is inspiring and tragic, as his story can transend one's perspective of our path in the world and what we can do with it, yet told by a bard no longer with us.

The most spellbinding 87-minute monologue ever. Still sound uninteresting? Read on. Yes, Spaulding Gray is seated at a desk in a theater with only a microphone, a notebook and a glass of water, and yes, he stays put and talks for the entire length of the film. But my friends, he weaves a tale that will haunt you, a tale at once both hilarious and tragic, pathetic and profound. Recounting his experiences as an actor playing a small role in Roland Joffe's war drama *The Killing Fields*, Spaulding Gray invites you so deeply into both South East Asia and his psyche that you feel you too have tried the hash and magic mushrooms and become the "wandering bachelor mendicant poet," witnessing each story he spins before you. Originally performed as an Obie-winning one man show *Off-Broadway*, the film was nominated for several Independent Spirit awards, including Best Director, Best Screenplay and Best Male Lead. Spaulding seems to dance between topics as diverse and far ranging as dealing with neighbors in Boston and New York City, sexual tourism in Thailand, hanging out in the Amtrak lounge car ("one big rolling confessional"), overcoming a swimming phobia in the Indian Ocean and "the worst auto-homeo genocide in modern history." Balancing neurotic self-indulgence with razor-sharp self-awareness and a keen sense of both the absurdity and profundity of all he encounters, seems a mathematical impossibility, but it is just that high-wire act that makes the film extraordinary. It is heartbreaking that *Swimming to Cambodia* is currently out of print. If you haven't yet seen it, or if you have but don't own it yet, you'd better get your copy quickly. I've got mine.

I was glued to the TV the entire time this was on--I couldn't even tear myself away to get a drink or go to the bathroom. Spaulding is quite the story teller, and even the rather mundane underlying story

(basically, "I had this small role in a movie"), really comes to life with all his voices and expressions and history lessons and tangents... I've never heard anyone before or since tell stories in such a way. After all, this is just a guy sitting in front of an audience talking. Who would think it would be so memorable?

Reading this book again al brought back memories of the live performances I was fortunate enough to attend in the early 80's. It is still a page turner or finger swiper as the case may be. Also got me through the current US election.

Yes, it is a documentary and, yes, it is a monologue. Yes, he discusses the sex trade in Cambodia which is extremely explicit. But this is about Cambodia. This is about the Killing Fields. This is about our involvement in that history. There is nothing gratuitous. Gray is captivating as he sits on a darkened stage with his words and topics accented with strategic lighting, maps, sounds and video clips. You will leave this film with a new understanding of what happened from Cambodia to Kent State. He also has a unique insight into mankind. In this, his "Talking Cure", you will be compelled to try to answer the question that he wrestles with - 'Is morality a moving feast?'. This is an important film.

Best performance piece ever. Best story teller ever. Miss him. Stories about Cambodia, filmmaking and relationships made funny and moving.

I understand that public schools may not really teach about Pol Pot and the Rouge. Therefore, I suggest this as a background that one should then research in History. My Schools always did cover these Events and There is also plenty of video footage out there in relation to these events. Oh Yeah... Taking the DVD as an art Piece, Spalding Gray is a great talent in monolouges as well as writings. He is no longer with us... And his legacy of media is rich and eye- opening.

Engaging, absorbing, not the usual big-screen drivel. To watch this film is to understand the elegance of expression which has been lost in the present era.

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