



California Dreaming : A Smooth-Running, Low Mileage, Best-Priced American Adventure

Lawrence Donegan

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Lawrence Donegan, erstwhile bassist, journalist, author, and adventure seeker, wanted to write about America, so he moved to California: the golden state where dreams are made, where money is made, and fame is just around the corner. Or so he thought when he departed his native Scotland to pursue his dreams, but landed smack in the middle of the largest used-car lot in America. Donegan quickly picks up a nickname -- "Hey Scotty" -- and a reputation -- "You're the worst salesman I've seen in twenty years." His struggles as a foreign musician and writer utterly displaced on this tough stretch of car-packed concrete are classic Donegan, humble and hilarious. But with mentors such as Mickey "The Legend" McDonald, Tony "The Tank" Tognazzini, and Frankie "The Rock" Reames, it isn't long before he acquires the brass balls and lowdown cunning he needs to sell his first car. No matter how slim the odds, he puts his heart and soul into his attempt to win the Oscar of the car lot -- the Salesman of the Month Award -- and you find yourself rooting for him every step of the way. A wonderful memoir about an aspect of American life that touches almost everybody, "California Dreaming" brings to mind the affectionate humor of NPR's "Car Talk" and Barry Levinson's "Tin Men." Donegan may or may not change the way you think about used-car salesmen, but he will help you understand the inner workings of this mysterious profession and leave you with a smile on your face, and maybe even some newfound respect. As he chronicles his career as an "asphalt warrior," Donegan uses his combination of comic wit and perverse familiarity to reel the reader into this wildly entertaining, brutally honest, and yet ultimately uplifting story about this much maligned and yet somehow beloved tribe. "California Dreaming" is a foreigner's discovery of a real American dream, more gratifying than any Silicon Valley fantasy.

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