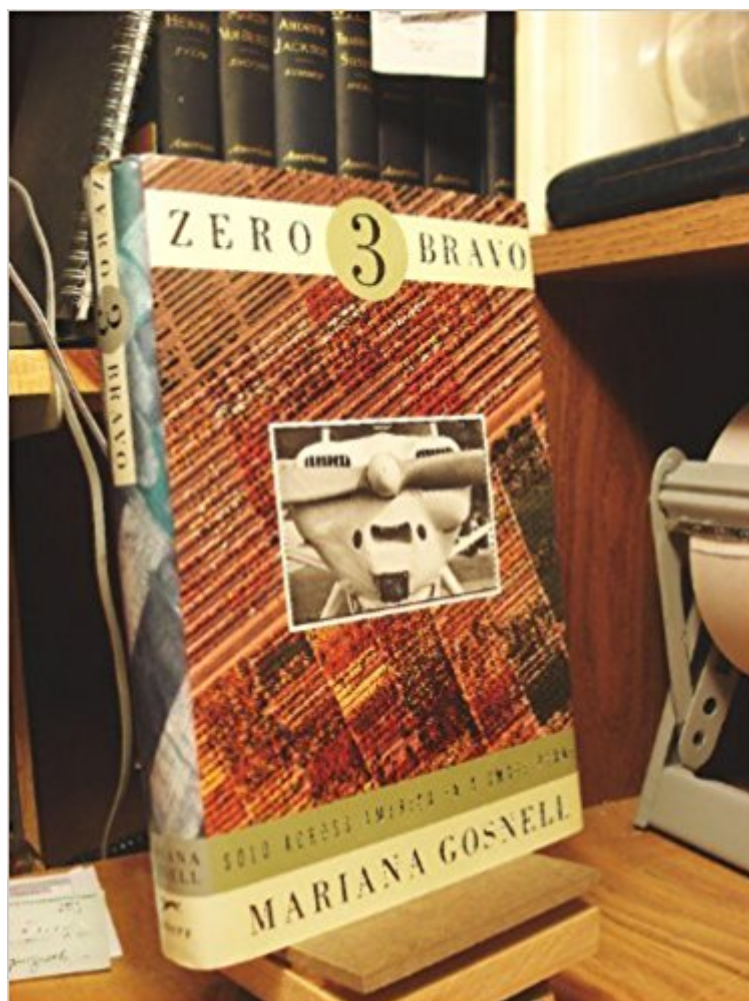


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Zero Three Bravo: Solo Across America In A Small Plane



Synopsis

Mariana Gosnell takes the reader along on her extraordinary voyage across the U.S. in her single-engine Luscombe Silvaire, Zero Three Bravo. Enticed by the ribbon of sky that she could see from her Manhattan office window, she took a leave of absence from her job and made a three-month solo flight, navigating by use of landmarks and landing in America's little-known, back-country airports. She traveled south from her home airport of Spring Valley, New York, down to North Carolina and Georgia, west across Texas to Los Angeles and north to San Francisco, and then east over the Rockies, the plains, and the farms of the Midwest until she was back home. What results is a lyrical description of land, sky, and water interwoven with experiences among small-town folks, maverick crop-dusters, banner towers, mechanics, and airport loiterers. With each landing there is a story to be told: the deaf-mute pilot who grounded himself until the eggs in the bird's nest lodged in his plane's engine had hatched, the woman running an airport by herself after losing both her husband and son to flying accidents, and the pilots and "hangar bums" who tried to hide their surprise when they saw a woman pilot flying cross-country solo. This true story -- including photos taken on the trip -- will make the confirmed urban dweller yearn for open spaces and the adventurous life. --This text refers to an alternate Hardcover edition.

Book Information

Hardcover: 371 pages

Publisher: Knopf; 1 edition (June 1, 1993)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0679400257

ISBN-13: 978-0679400257

Product Dimensions: 1.2 x 6.8 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 26 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,135,907 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #8 in [Books > Travel >](#)

[Australia & South Pacific > Guam](#) #153 in [Books > Travel > Food, Lodging & Transportation >](#)

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Customer Reviews

Crossing the country in her much-loved small plane (a Luscombe N803B, identified as Zero Three Bravo on radio transmissions), Gosnell, a former medical and science reporter for Newsweek, offers a bird's-eye view of our nation's land-, sea- and skylscapes. A flight-infatuated adventurer on a

summer holiday, she wings happily aloft in the airplanes reserved for noncommercial craft, dipping low enough to distinguish country fields and city streets, or soaring upward to exult in the firmament. Here and there, she touches down for a dinner date, a shopping tour with her mother, or simply to reconnoiter a town, have a cup of coffee and gas up. All the while, Gosnell enthuses about her plane and the mechanics of flying, bringing to life the network of kindred spirits who use and staff the small airports that service the private flying community. With contagious delight, she opens up a unique world for her readers. Photos not seen by PW. BOMC alternate. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Former Newsweek reporter Gosnell recounts her trip across the United States alone in her private plane. She describes experiences at many small airports as she flies from New York down across the southern United States to California, then north and back across the Midwest. She encounters plenty of interesting characters, hears many stories, and weaves these together with touches of aviation history to make a contemplative personal narrative. Gosnell's journalistic style lets us appreciate the variety of people and places she visits, from New York City to Plains, Georgia. Recommended for all libraries with strong aviation and travel collections.- Gwen Gregory, U.S. Courts Lib., Phoenix, Ariz.Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Just finished re-reading for the first time in 20 years. The first time I read it, I was completely smitten with the idea tossing the rat race to the winds for a few months and becoming an aerial hobo across the continent. I've read numerous books since, with the same theme but with different faces on different routes on different continents. This one stood out in my memory enough that I led another copy and found myself literary stowaway in her tiny Luscombe again. After the re-read, I again say it is one of the best books on the theme. Its not written as a best-selling novel, with twists and turns leaving the reader feeling they just got off a crazy roller coaster. Its non-fiction. It is slower at times. Others here have described it as a yarn, prose, and exposition. It is all of those things. But Ms. Gosnell hasn't forgotten that what makes a memorable story are people- characters that are destined to occasionally bubble up in your mind years (or decades) later. While re-reading this, I kept thinking how very different my experience was in this age of Google, which allowed me to set the book down and do some digging to find out what happened in the decades since. Some were easy to uncover, some took more effort with datawork. I wont spoil any surprises, but the stories in her book- the people, the airports, the author, the plane- continued after the book was published, some longer than others. Turns out I waited a few years too long to re-read and review this. Ms Gosnell

isn't around now to goad into pecking out a followup, or to let her know she managed to fire an ember that became buried by decades of my own rat race, but never really went out.

This book isn't the usual mainly about flight experiences. It is more a book about the people Gosnell meets and most of all about her persona. It makes the first few chapters somewhat difficult until the reader understands that her slant on life is different and sharper than mainstream. Most of the women have virtue and most of the men are old boys. She carries the womens lib chip yet has an accurate sense of the time. It would have been helpful to the reader to peg the time she writes about. Indirectly revealed in chapter Shafter two thirds through the book. The narrative is only the tip of the effort and discomfort required to make the trip in a early 50's Luscombe and rough it as she mainly did. She is a good stick in that she planned considering weather and terrain, was an excellent navigator using mostly dead reckoning, flew the aircraft well and was cautious. She went Home Again in the Auxier chapter with predictable results. Her story has impact to me as we are contemporary in time and events. The Depression is not only in a history book. For aviators, her description of stall speed and altitude chapter SF.Tahoe is incorrect. Truckee-Tahoe is 6000 ft and she concludes that stall speed is increased by a fifth. Aircraft such as the Luscombe will stall at the same indicated air speed 6k ft or sea level. True airspeed at the stall does increase and that is what the pilot perceives close to the ground. Recommend using Google Earth to fly to her destinations and to see Mojave and other interesting areas. Earth has prior year map option for a trip back in time. I also flew a Luscombe 8A in MS FSX for the return trip from Palo Alto each of her stops and a feel of boring flight hours at 100 mph. Spring Valley NY is long gone and the aircraft sits at an airfield near Washington NJ. My aviation back ground is similar to "I should" at the end of chapter Spring Valley. References: Pic of the aircraft at Spring Valley prior to flight. Note location now.[...] Junior Burchinal is chapter Paris. He defied "Old pilots and bold pilots but no old bold pilots" Could fly an airplane but lacked judgment. Here is the P-38L converted into junk when the brakes failed during landing at Flying Tigers Airport and rebuilt. About 1/3 down.[...]

The book arrived sooner than expected and in better condition than was described. I am looking forward to reading the book - its next in line on my summer reading list. Thank you!

I enjoyed this book thoroughly. I was caught up in the description of the journey and the details of each stop along the way. My only disappointment was the lack of any dates in the book. It was hard to determine the time period the journey took place in and this was a bit of a distraction for me. Still,

it was a great read.

If you are a pilot, this book is right up there with "A Sky of my Own" and "Fate is the Hunter". If you are not a pilot the human dimension alone will keep you interested and you will pass an agreeable moment. I hope that now that the author passed away the book will be available on tablet at a low price. The hard cover price is very steep.

I thought the book excellent. Not only interesting for the places, events, and people described, but fascinating because it allows one to get into the mind and poetic spirit of a solo adventurer. Its the story of an odyssey so many of us pilots and arm-chair pilots only dream about: from the nuts and bolts of a three month trip to the awesome beauties and terrors of being alone in the air.

As a pilot myself, I could identify with this flying adventure.

I just love this read! It is so enjoyable and heartfelt that I have read it multiple times over the years! If you love aviation ... you will love this book! If you have a passing interest in aviation ... you will love this book! A very sensitive look into not only the adventure of the author but her heart, her soul, her very person as well.

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