



Chasing America: Notes from a Rock 'n' Soul Integrationist

Dennis Watlington

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"And I thought I knew this crazy-brave black boy who bolted out of a Harlem ghetto into a white prep school and bobbed and weaved his way across the treacherous divide between black and white America. But Dennis Watlington's life story is even more astonishing than I knew. He emerges a no-jive black integrationist who is proud of the slave ancestry that makes him a solid American foreperson." -Gail Sheehy, bestselling author of *Passages* and *Understanding Men's Passages*

Chasing America is a rollercoaster ride through promise and poverty, affirmative action and addiction, and a powerful story that captures a life and an era that is seminally American.

Born in Harlem in 1952, Dennis developed a heroin habit at the age of 14, kicked it, and received a scholarship to the Hotchkiss School where he was elected president of his class. He went on to NYU, became involved in film and theater (he had a small role in *The Deerhunter* and gave Bruce Willis his start in a play called *Bullpen*), got addicted to crack, kicked that, and became an Emmy winning television writer. *Chasing America* shows us the best and worst that America offers to a Black man--from the Jim Crow South to boarding school life in New England to backstage at the Fillmore East to a holding cell in Bellevue Hospital.

Part Ellison, part Exley, *Chasing America* is an amazing story.

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