**Adventure Capitalism**

*A History of Libertarian Exit, from the Era of Decolonization to the Digital Age*

**Raymond Craib**

Imagine a capitalist paradise. An island utopia governed solely by the rules of the free market and inspired by the fictions of Ayn Rand and Robinson Crusoe. Sound far-fetched? It may not be. Over the past half-century, the wealthy have sought to escape regulation, taxes, and society by creating private enclaves beyond national borders in what Raymond Craib terms “libertarian exit.” These have been attempted from the southwest Pacific to the Caribbean to the North Sea, often with dire consequences for local inhabitants. Taking Nevada libertarian and land developer Michael Oliver as a case in point, Craib explores in careful detail the ideology and practice of libertarian exit. Through meticulous research in archives in the US, the UK, and Vanuatu, as well as in FBI files acquired through the Freedom of Information Act, Craib uncovers an array of figures behind Oliver’s story: Fidel Castro and the Koch brothers, American segregationists and Melanesian socialists, Honolulu-based real estate speculators and British Special Branch spies, soldiers of fortune and English lords, Orange County engineers and Tongan navigators, CIA operatives and CBS news executives, and a new breed of techno-utopians and an old guard of Honduran coup leaders. Oliver’s story is the story of our time. Given the new privatized exit being pursued—floating seasteads, free private cities, and space colonization—it may also be the story of our future.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Raymond Craib is the Marie Underhill Noll Professor of History at Cornell University and the author of *The Cry of the Renegade: Politics and Poetry in Interwar Chile*, *Cartographic Mexico: A History of State Fixations and Fugitive Landscapes*, and with Barry Maxwell, co-editor of *No Gods No Masters No Peripheries: Global Anarchisms*.

**ACCOLADES**

“They don’t like hobbles and they can’t stand fences, and so today’s libertarian frontiersmen are looking for land, lots of land, perhaps in New Zealand. Or maybe they’ll jet to Mars, build cities in the thick of Honduras or string barges together and create a floating republic, anything to avoid regulations, laws, and oversights. Ray Craib’s brilliant *Adventure Capitalism* is a fascinating story of some spectacular fiascos, but it also makes a more profound point: there does exist a class of super-billionaires so rich they’d rather leave the world in ruins than admit humans are social beings and our survival requires recognition that we need each other.”

—Greg Grandin

“A masterpiece of historical excavation into libertarian dreams of a brave new unfree world.”

—Debjani Bhattacharyya

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