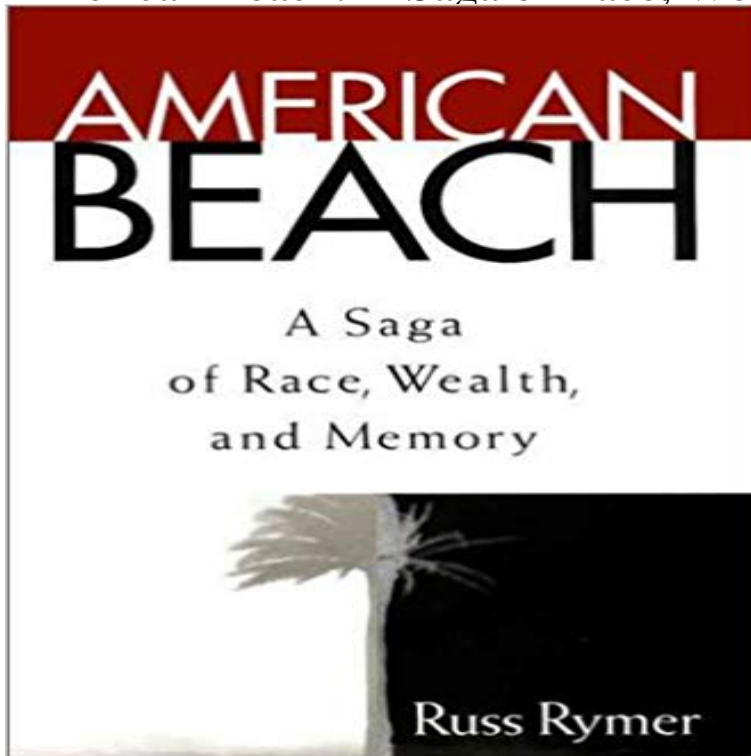


## American Beach: A Saga of Race, Wealth, and Memory



In *American Beach*, award-winning journalist Russ Rymer provides astonishing insights into the meaning of American race relations. Avoiding the easy clichés of victimhood and oppression, he searches for answers through three unexpected, overlapping, intensely personal stories. Ultimately he presents a vision of a nation where the futures of blacks and whites are as linked as their histories, and where black experience offers a key to the struggle of every modern American. *American Beach* opens with the killing of an unarmed black motorist by white police on a Florida resort island. It's the emblematic race confrontation of the 1990s, but Rymer's examination turns up everything but the ordinary. His journey leads us through ghostly plantation cemeteries, sance parlors, black resorts, European opera houses, Harlem salons, America's newest town, and its oldest incorporated black city. We meet black pirates and planters, witness the incendiary death of the world's first black (and pioneer woman) aviator, the boardroom deliberations of the Walt Disney Company, and the posthumous but victorious last crusade of a prominent black novelist. Along the way, we are guided by the most extraordinary real-life Southern cast since *Mighty in the Garden of Good and Evil*, including Florida's first black millionaire and his great-grandfather, a flamboyant pauper who lives on a chaise lounge on the beach, from whence she strives to salvage her history and rescue her imperiled culture. As Rymer brilliantly shows, no matter what corner of America of which walk of life we may be from, it's our culture and our history as well.

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