

Thompson, Hunter S. *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga*. New York: Random House, 1966. Print.

This is the work that thrust Hunter S. Thompson into the national spotlight. Originally commissioned to write a story about motorcycle clubs, Thompson embedded himself with the Hell's Angels, rode with them and eventually gained their trust. Over time, the relationship soured and Thompson was beaten brutally by the group. His book on the ordeal was—and still is—considered groundbreaking work among journalists, my(former)self included.

Thompson, Hunter S. *Fear and Loathing on the Campaign Trail '72*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1973. Print.

It was 1972, and Thompson was a political correspondent for Rolling Stone magazine. His observations from the campaign trail not only kept readers informed, but helped shape public opinion. His book on the experience is owned by most political reporters, and renowned for his critical eye and ability to cut through the nonsense. But the book also shows his bias, as his affection for Democratic presidential candidate George McGovern is apparent. This is one of Thompson's books that helped me better appreciate him as a writer and analyst, but think more critically of him as a true journalist, where biases are supposed to be kept in check.

Thompson, Hunter S. *The Great Shark Hunt: Strange Tales from a Strange Time*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1979. Print.

The essays that make up *The Great Shark Hunt* show Thompson during his early years, with topics ranging from politics and current events to Thompson's personal life and sports. There is one story that stands out, and when I see this book, it's the first thing that comes to mind. Thompson recalls a time in 1963 when he witnessed a Britisher hitting golf balls off his terrace into the streets of Cali, Colombia. The imagery of that incident, of golf balls bouncing off rooftops of the poorer residents below, stuck with Thompson, and it was memorable for me, too. I have strived to describe a scene like him since the first time I read this account.

Thompson, Hunter S. and Steadman, Ralph. *The Curse of Lono*. New York: Random House, 1983. Print.

The 1980s were an interesting time for Hunter S. Thompson. His star had started to fade, but his lifestyle remained the same. When asked to cover the Honolulu Marathon for a running magazine, Thompson accepted the assignment, writing to longtime friend and artist Ralph Steadman that he planned to win the thing. But in true Thompson fashion, nothing went as planned, and we are left with a hilarious tale. The book was released in print for a short period in 1983, then re-released in 2005 as a limited edition. It's one of the funniest books I've ever read.

Thompson, Hunter S. *The Proud Highway: Saga of a Desperate Southern Gentleman*. New York: Random House, 1997. Print.

*The Proud Highway* was one of Thompson's most influential books for me. It showed his journey from juvenile delinquent to journalist, much like me. I was shocked to read that Thompson worked briefly for a paper in central Pennsylvania, not far from where I went to college. I remember driving my Ford Bronco through the winding mountain roads to get to the town, cruising through the streets and trying to imagine where Thompson might have lived. The cover of the book, showing a young Thompson crouching with a bag by the side of a road, cigarette in hand, is still one of my all-time favorites.

Thompson, Hunter S. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas (And Other American Stories)*. New York: Random House, 1998. Print.

By far Thompson's most popular and successful work, *Fear and Loathing* began as a Rolling Stone magazine assignment to cover a motorcycle race in Las Vegas. He was only supposed to write a 250-word photo caption. What came out of it was a massive article that ran in two parts in Rolling Stone and eventually became a book. It introduced much of the public to Thompson's signature "gonzo" form of journalism, reflected on the 1960s drug and counterculture movement, and brought Thompson critical acclaim. This is the book that showed me the importance of pulling a reader into a story with a powerful lede. "We were somewhere around Barstow on the edge of the desert when the drugs began to take hold."

Thompson, Hunter S. *The Rum Diary*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1998. Print.

A young Hunter S. Thompson in 1959 began this novel about an alcoholic journalist living and working in Puerto Rico. It's a booze-filled tale of jealousy, treachery, violence and lust, set in the sultry city of San Juan. The book wasn't published until years later, and the story eventually was made into a motion picture. I first read the book in college, a few months before Thompson's death, and fell in love with it. Nothing else I ever read influenced me more in my journey to become a journalist.

Thompson, Hunter S. *Fear and Loathing in America: The Brutal Odyssey of an Outlaw Journalist*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. Print.

In this book, we get a glimpse of Thompson from 1968-1976. We see him transform from a struggling writer into one of international renown. We also see him run for sheriff of Aspen, Colorado, on the "Freak Power" ticket. He shaves his head and refers to the incumbent Republican sheriff, who sported a crew cut, as his "long-haired opponent." The ordeal showed Thompson's sense of humor, but it also displayed his passion for politics. It showed that underneath it all, he deeply cared about the future of this country—something that's true for a vast majority of journalists, despite the rhetoric of some.

Thompson, Hunter S. *Screwjack*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000. Print.

As Thompson sat in a Los Angeles hotel room in 1969, an assignment deadline loomed. But intoxicated by drugs and alcohol, Thompson spent the night documenting his descent into madness. The story is just one of three in *Screwjack*—the others deal with an alcoholic wife-beater and a cat—that had a private printing in 1991, but was later produced for the masses. This is one of those stories that can make you go from hating first-person narratives to loving them. It certainly did for me.

Thompson, Hunter S. *Hey Rube: Blood Sport, the Bush Doctrine, and the Downward Spiral of Dumbness*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Print.

As Thompson's career wound down, he continued to write, albeit with more of a focus on sports—a longtime passion. But he also kept tabs on the political scene, and was highly critical of then-President George W. Bush. This book, released a year before Thompson's death, gives a glimpse into how he was spending his latter years, but also shows how he never really changed.