



Clowns to the Left of Me, Jokers to the Right: American Life in Columns

Michael Smerconish

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Opinionated talk show host and columnist Michael Smerconish has been chronicling local, state, and national events for the *Philadelphia Daily News* and the *Philadelphia Inquirer* for more than 15 years. He has sounded off on topics as diverse as the hunt for Osama bin Laden and what the color of your Christmas lights says about you. In this collection of 100 of his most memorable columns, Smerconish reflects on American political life with his characteristic feistiness. A new Afterword for each column provides updates on both facts and feelings, indicating how the author has evolved over the years, moving from a reliable Republican voter to a political Independent.

Clowns to the Left of Me, Jokers to the Right covers the post-9/11 years, Barack Obama's ascension, and the rise of Donald Trump. Smerconish describes meeting Ronald Reagan, having dinner with Fidel Castro, barbecuing with the band YES in his backyard, spending the same night with Pete Rose and Ted Nugent, drinking champagne from the Stanley Cup, and conducting Bill Cosby's only pretrial interview. He also writes about local Philadelphia culture, from Sid Mark to the Rizzo statue.

Smerconish's outlook as expressed in these impassioned opinion pieces goes beyond "liberal" or "conservative." His thought process continues to evolve and change, and as it does, he aims to provoke readers to do the same.

All author proceeds benefit the Children's Crisis Treatment Center, a Philadelphia- based, private, nonprofit agency that provides behavioral health services to children and their families.

Clowns to the Left of Me, Jokers to the Right: American Life in Columns Details

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Craig Amazon says

I have been listening to Michael Smerconish on his Sirius/XM call-in radio program on POTUS for several years, but this is the first of his books I have read. This is a collection of columns written by Michael from the early 2000s to 2017 for the major newspapers in his hometown of Philadelphia. He covers a broad field of topics, including politics, current events, family, musicians, and other celebrities. It is obvious that the events of 9-11-01 left a permanent mark on him, and he returns to the topic several times. There are plenty of personal interest pieces that will be less relevant to most readers, but they are still interesting primarily because of Michael's delivery. He has an impressive vocabulary, and he manages to discuss some of the most serious topics of the day with careful consideration and humor.

A licensed lawyer, a political commentator, and the host of his own show on CNN, Smerconish has an unusual breadth of experience and a refreshing perspective. He refuses to be pigeonholed as a liberal, conservative, Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, or any other label that serves to divide the population more and more each year. His commentary is honest and respectful, but he resists political correctness whenever possible. No one will likely agree with him all the time, but it is hard not to appreciate his informed opinions and thoughtful conclusions. For those who are tired of the divisiveness that characterizes modern discourse in this country, Smerconish is a breath of fresh air. I highly recommend this book, along with Michael's radio program, CNN show, and his ongoing columns that appear in newspapers across the country. I also suggest the Audible version of this book, with Michael reading the columns, each with its own afterward update written for the collection.

Rich says

I really enjoy Michael Smerconish's radio program on the SiriusXM Potus channel. He is one of the rare political commentators out there that would be described as a centrist and, more importantly, one who is open to discourse from all sides of an issue. As it turns out, he is even more than that.

This book covers about 15 years of Michael's columns written for newspapers in Philadelphia and covers a wide range of topics from politics to education and from daily life to friendships. I truly enjoyed getting to know his viewpoint on many areas in addition to politics. Still, there is enough political stuff here to satisfy the politics junky. As a bonus, Michael adds "afterwords" on all columns (there's 100 here) to update the content and to update his current view on the matter. Well done.

TheGeekyBlogger says

Listened for Fun (Audible)

Overall Rating: 3.50

Audio Rating: 4.00

Must know in advance: I am a moderate liberal so I sometimes agree with Michael and other times do not.

I thought this was a good mix of his POV's. Overall this audiobook was pretty much what I expected.

Lisa Milo says

I have always enjoyed Smerconish on CNN and feel he does a great job of telling both sides. I don't think I would have known if he were Democrat, Republican or Independant (which is high praise) until I read this book. I loved it; with his thought-provoking, funny & insightful columns and I loved the afterwords he provided after each column.
