

America From The Outside

by Steve Finan

You aren't easy to explain, you Americans.

There isn't "an American". There are just "Americans". But then, you aren't just Americans. You are Irish, Spanish, African, WASP, Native, Asian. And yet, somehow still you are all Americans.

You have more ideas, trouble, problems and belligerence than most countries.

You are a collection of stories that sometimes don't seem to touch each other New England and New Mexico and all the Americas inbetween.

You are opposites. You don't have a class system, but then you do. You are often accused of being insular, but invade other nations. You are The Great Satan, but first to deliver humanitarian aid.

You tell the world what you are.

You are Monroe, Nirvana, Sinatra, Updike. Gated communities and children with names invented by hallucination. Race problems and the land of the free. The American Dream and projects. Nascar. Viet vets. Green ideas and oil barons. Donald Duck. Two kinds of Coke. California girls and spree shooters. Strange sports the rest of the world ignores. Obesity and the greatest Olympian in history. Drawls and fine lit. 299 science Nobel laureates and creationists. The Big Apple and bigger waistlines. It's A Wonderful Life and lethal injections. Tomorrow is another day and what we got here is a failure to communicate, Rosebud.

The world bemoans "Americanisation" . . . and rushes to embrace your every output.

The next empire to decline and fall. The best bet to send a man to Mars.

You ate Led Zep. You kidnapped Garbo. You murdered JFK and make up idiot tales about it.

Who are you? Who are you really?
I don't understand.

