

**South and West: From a Notebook** From the best-selling author of the National Book Award-winning *The Year of Magical Thinking* two extended excerpts from her never-before-seen notebooks--writings that offer an illuminating glimpse into the mind and process of a legendary writer. Joan Didion has always kept notebooks: of overheard dialogue, observations, interviews, drafts of essays and articles--and here is one such draft that traces a road trip she took with her husband, John Gregory Dunne, in June 1970, through Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. She interviews prominent local figures, describes motels, diners, a deserted reptile farm, a visit with Walker Percy, a ladies' brunch at the Mississippi Broadcasters' Convention. She writes about the stifling heat, the almost viscous pace of life, the sulfurous light, and the preoccupation with race, class, and heritage she finds in the small towns they pass through. And from a different notebook: the "California Notes" that began as an assignment from *Rolling Stone* on the Patty Hearst trial of 1976. Though Didion never wrote the piece, watching the trial and being in San Francisco triggered thoughts about the city, its social hierarchy, the Hearsts, and her own upbringing in Sacramento. Here, too, is the beginning of her thinking about the West, its landscape, the western women who were heroic for her, and her own lineage, all of which would appear later in her acclaimed 2003 book, *Where I Was From*. ...more **South and West: From a Notebook PDF ebook**

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