

Orinda Author Turns 'Trumpisms' into Compilation of Quotes

By Lou Fancher



Carol Pogash talks about her book

Photo provided

Whatever your politics – whether you consider him a populist or eye-popping – there's no question presidential candidate Donald Trump has Americans flipping out.

Which made the arrival at Orinda Books of 50 upside-down copies of writer Carol Pogash's new book, "Quotations from Chairman Trump" (Rossetta Books), somehow unsurprising – and transformed the manufacturing mistake into a must-have commodity at a Jan. 30 book launch.

"People are saying they'd prefer an upside-down copy," said bookstore owner Maria Roden. "It's a phenomenon!"

Roden could have been applying the term to Trump, the misassembled books, or indirectly admitting that when Pogash told her about the book one year ago, she wondered if Trump would still be an active player in the campaign by the time the book was published. "Silly me," Roden said.

Pogash, a longtime Orinda resident, writes frequently for The New York Times. The celebrated reporter and columnist has published two previous books, including the Pulitzer Prize-nominated "Seduced by Madness: The True Story of the Susan Polk Murder Case." Her just-released "little red book" is modeled on "Quotations from Chairman Mao" and offers a pithy introduction, Trump quotations with identifying date and location – and full credit to her husband, Dan Detzner, for inventing her favorite term for the candidate's unbelievable terrain, "Trumplandia."

Even Pogash said she was initially surprised by Trump having turned a centuries-old political process on its metaphoric head. "When I started coming across Trump's daily cull of quotes, I was taken aback. It was the unadulterated 'id' coming out," Pogash said.

Soon enough, her mind went to Mao and the small red book that put in print the Chinese leader's grandiose, authoritarian voice. About Trump's words, she said, "They're not poetry, but they're mesmerizing."

With Mao as her model and comedians/television hosts Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert as her inspiration, Pogash said she "channeled that curmudgeon's perspec-

tive." Compiling what would be Trump's oratorio, if it was set to music, she realized, "He wakes up every day, ready to go to war. He only feels good if he can go to war. Then, he wants to go a step further. He wants to humiliate his opponents."

Proving she can come up with sound bites as potent as her subject's, Pogash added, "He's the only person he listens to. He's his own consultant."

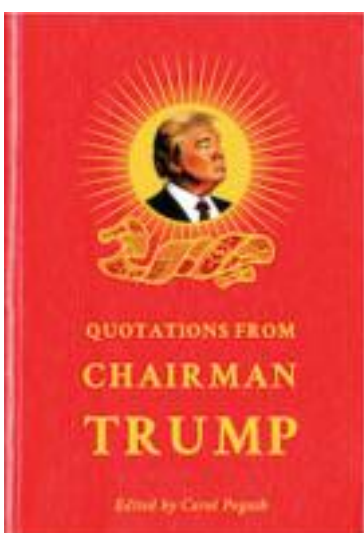
The quotes, collected over six months but not held to strict chronology, are redistributed to tell a story, according to Pogash. Moving through a progression – categories from his self-proclaimed talent talk to candidate stump tweets to "President Trump" proclamations and others – she said the book is obvious satire, but that satire illuminates truth. During her research, she read Trump's every debate, tweet, speech and almost every article written about him up to December 2015. "He's speaking to a latent part of people's feelings and fears about this country. When he says he wants to make America great again, it's as if he wants to return us to the 1950s. But he can't do that; we're a global economy now."

Asking herself and the intimate group of readers at the store what will be left behind, if Trump is not the eventual victor in the presidential race, Pogash gave her answer: "There'll be a crassness to future debates, the push to the right will become pronounced in the Republican party. That party will be left with remorse and need for reconstruction; Latinos, women, Muslims and others will need to be brought back into their party."

Annette O'Connor of Orinda called Trump "a brilliant entertainer" but said his campaign and anger directed at specific communities is dangerous. "It ill behoves a nation of immigrants to denigrate immigrants," she said.

Pogash said in separate comments that the book has not been out long enough to have drawn direct response from readers and reviewers. She has friends who are Trump supporters and despite not aligning her political preference alongside their positions, she has a measure of respect for Trump's devotion to his family. "He has kids who turned out OK, so there's that," she said.

Still waiting for the first reviews, she said an early indication of the book's future might be learned from Amazon. After speaking in late January with "Hardball" television show host Chris Matthews for a 90-second spot, he called her book, "Friday night dessert." Amazon's reaction? "Quotations from Chairman Trump" went overnight from the 28,000 ranking to 400. "There are enthusiasts and those who don't want to hear more from him, but everyone has an opinion," Pogash said.



Upcoming Events at Orinda Books

Poet authors Cynthia-Leslie Bole, who wrote "The Luminous In-Between," a collection of graceful and lyrical poems that invite us to celebrate the radiance of our everyday lives, and Karen Mireau, founder of Azalea Art Press who has helped authors manifest their literary vision for over 30 years and author of "Matzu.Kaze," as well as artist Carol Van Zandt, will speak about their works from 4 to 6 p.m. Monday, March 7 at Orinda Books.

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