

The Happiest Man in the World: An Account of the Life of Poppa Neutrino

Alec Wilkinson



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The Happiest Man in the World: An Account of the Life of Poppa Neutrino Alec Wilkinson *The Happiest Man in the World* buoyantly describes seventy-four-year-old David Pearlman, a restless and migratory soul, a mariner, a musician, a member of the Explorers Club and a friend of the San Francisco Beats, a former preacher and sign painter, a polymath, a pauper, and a football strategist for the Red Mesa Redskins of the Navajo Nation. When Pearlman was fifty, he was bitten on the hand by a dog in Mexico and for two years got so sick that he thought he would die. When he recovered, he felt so different that he decided he needed a new name. He began calling himself Poppa Neutrino, after the itinerant particle that is so small it can hardly be detected. To Neutrino, the particle represents the elements of the hidden life that assert themselves discreetly.

Inspired by Thor Heyerdahl and Kon-Tiki, Neutrino is the only man ever to build a raft from garbage he found on the streets of New York and sail it across the North Atlantic.

The New York *Daily News* described the accomplishment as "the sail of the century." *National Geographic* broadcast an account of the trip as part of its series on extreme adventures. And now he is on a quest to cross the Pacific on a raft. If he makes it, he plans to continue around the world. No one has ever sailed around the world on a raft. Meanwhile, he has invented the Neutrino Clock Offense, an unstoppable football play, which a former coach of the New York Jets describes as being as innovative as the forward pass.

The philosophical underpinnings of Neutrino's existence are what he calls Triads, a concept worked out after years of reading and reflection. He believes that each person, to be truly happy, must define his or her three deepest desires and pursue them remorselessly. Freedom, Joy, and Art are Neutrino's three. *The Happiest Man in the World* is a lavish, exotic, funny, and deeply serious book about a man who has led a life of profound engagement and ceaseless adventure.

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