



NEW RELEASE

Brian Kaplan *I'm Not On Your Vacation* *Greetings from Cape Cod*

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Off-season Cape Cod – the other side of America's iconic holiday destination

For most people, Cape Cod is about summer vacations by the sea. Sun-drenched days at the beach, splashing in the ocean, and just being lazy. Overindulging on oysters, fried clams, and ice cream. Sipping cold beer and cocktails while the sun sets.

I'm much more interested in the »other side« of life on the Cape. There are the seasonal workers: thousands of people who flock to the Cape every summer, not to play but to work. They come from Jamaica and eastern Europe – students from Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Moldova. They work the deep-fryers and make sandwiches in the kitchens. They scrub the floors and toilets in the motels and rental cottages. Many work two or three jobs at a time, earning more money in a week than they could in a month back home.

There are the locals and the transplants – peculiar characters who are drawn to live, year-round, in an »end-of-the-road« place like the outermost Cape. And, then there's the long »off season.« In July and August, the population in the small towns on the outer Cape explodes tenfold. But, summer is short. By September and October, there's a mass exodus. The tourists have gone home. Cottages are boarded up. Motels, restaurants and clam shacks shut down for the season. And, the coastline is pummeled by powerful winter storms. It's quiet, lonely and raw.

– Brian Kaplan

To Griffin, now fifty-seven, roughly the same age his parents had been when he and Joy married, the Cape place-names were still magical: Falmouth, Woods Hole, Barnstable, Dennis, Orleans, Harwich. They made a boy of him again and put him in the backseat of his parents' car, where he'd spent much of his boyhood, unbelt-

ed, resting his arms on the front seat, trying to hear what they, who never made any attempt to include him in their conversations, were talking about. It wasn't so much that he was interested in their front-seat conversations as aware that decisions that impacted him were being made up there, and if privy to these hatching plans he might offer an opinion. Unfortunately, the fact that his chin was resting on the seat back seemed to preclude this. Most of what he overheard wasn't really worth the effort anyway. »Wellfleet,« his mother might say, studying the road atlas. »Why haven't we ever tried Wellfleet?« By the time Griffin was a high school freshman, which marked the last of their Cape vacations, they'd rented just about everywhere. Each summer, when they handed over the keys at the end of their stay, the rental agent always asked if they wanted to book it for next year, but they always said no, which made Griffin wonder if the perfect spot they were searching for really existed. Perhaps, he concluded, just looking was sufficient in and of itself.

– Excerpt from the novel *That Old Cape Magic*, Copyright © 2009 Richard Russo, originally published in hardcover by Alfred A. Knopf, a division of Random House, Inc., and subsequently published in softcover by Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc.

Brian Kaplan is a photographer who lives and works in and around Boston and on Cape Cod.

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