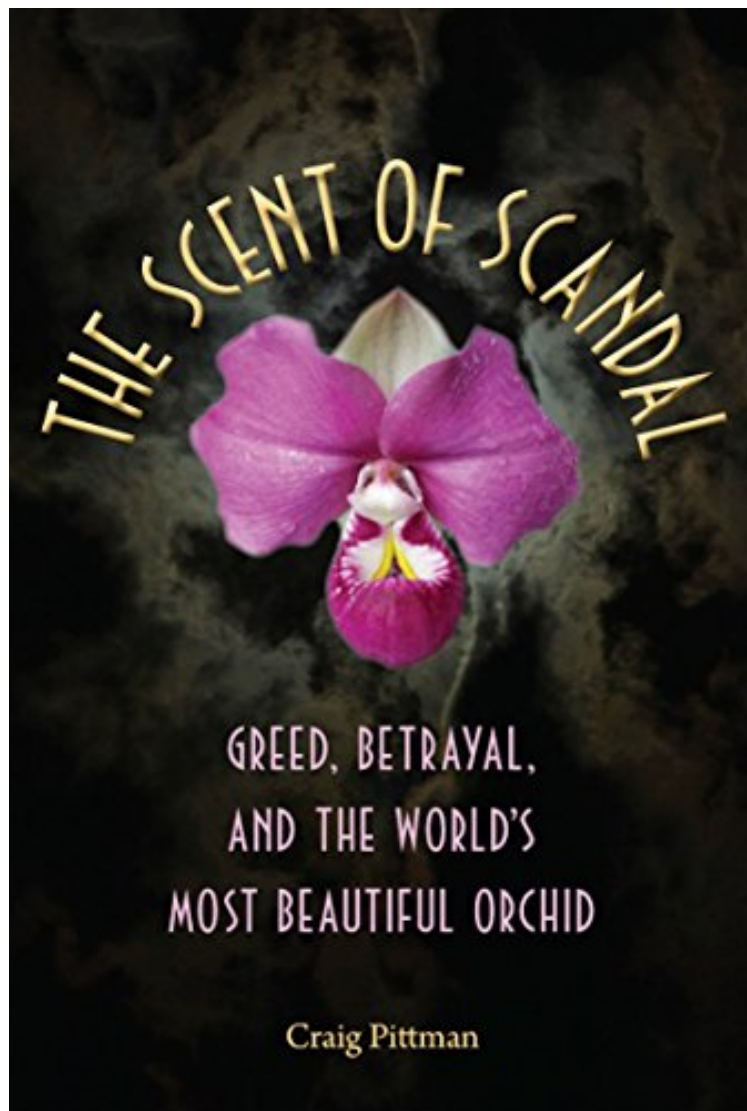


(Download) The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid (Florida History and Culture)

## The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid (Florida History and Culture)

*Craig Pittman*

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**Craig Pittman : The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid (Florida History and Culture)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid (Florida History and Culture):

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. A great stirrer up of passions. By G. E Farr Back in 1960 when I

turned sixteen a couple of friends and I headed out to explore Big Cypress. Part of our purpose was to experiment with cigarettes and bourbon. For me, at least, son of a hunting guide and nephew of the first biologist ever hired by the old Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, the appeal was even more (really!) the opportunity to explore and investigate the wild places and wildlife. I craved encounters with anything that ran, flew, or -- best of all -- slithered. But one of our number was interested in the plants, in particular orchids. And they were profuse. The little Butterfly Orchids grew in such profusion that when they bloomed they perfumed the air downwind of the cypress domes they favored. Cigar Orchids and Ghost Orchids were also common, and even more captivating. I was smitten. I still am. We were all smitten. So we stole them. Stole them shamelessly and enthusiastically for parents, teachers, and girls. And on nearby Chevalier Loop (which the locals all called "Chevrolet") a retired Navy Chief had established his own orchid jungle, with boardwalks running out over the swamp waters. He was friendly and informative with us, but he hated "garden club ladies" with a bitter passion, expressed with the force and vocabulary honed in a former life at sea, on warships, in combat. The ladies arrived, according to him, in chauffeured limosines and -- stole orchids. And so I learned, first hand and young, that orchids, as James II of England said of falconry, are "a great stirrer up of passions." "A Scent of Scandal" is a recounting of one more story of these most beautiful and erotic of flowers, and of the passionate, irrational, and often illegal actions they inspire. Our merry 1960 band of hormonally overloaded high school boys, a Popeye-double Navy Chief, and larcenous rich Miami ladies was far less varied and colorful than the cast of orchid fanatics Craig Pittman follows through the episode of discovery and intrigue he reports in "Scent...". Other reviews perfectly describe in accurate detail the plot and specific subject matter of this fascinating book. For me it was a return to and reminder of that first introduction to the perilous intoxication of orchids and wonder of encountering them in the wild places they inhabit and symbolize. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Wonderfully written expos on the Orchid World....By JeffKnowsStuffThough orchids are a multi-billion dollar industry worldwide, the true money lies with individuals who take advantage of new species for both hybridization and collectors value. This book explains the grey area encompassing the legal ownership and naming rights of orchids, and the rush to be the first to market...The importance of this flower lies in the large size and new color, never before seen in the *Phragmipedium* genus. This makes collectors and hybridizers salivate. This being said, I am the owner of a legally obtained *Phrag kovachii* seedling, which by the way are down to about \$100 for a two inch seedling from several hundred a few years ago. Even the growers, whom I speak with personally, many mentioned in this book, speculate that thieves took several thousand of these plants from the wild to supply their illegal ventures and wealthy collectors. A wonderful well written account! 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Could not put this book down! By Heather Anne This non-fiction book reads like a novel and kept me completely entranced. It reminds me of John Berendt's novel, *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, because of its upscale Southern setting, its quirky characters with diverse motives, and a smoke-and-mirrors feeling. The setting, Sarasota, Florida, is well-depicted, as are the many individuals who are interested in rare orchids for a variety of reasons. Human nature (greed, ego, power, revenge, altruism) all are at play. The account of travels to remote jungles, clever methods of smuggling, international laws, orchid propagation, and professional connections among scientists is detailed but never dull. I am now eager to visit Selby Gardens to feel its ambiance in person and re-imagine the drama that unfolded there.

Some people will do anything for beauty or fame FANTASTIC. If I did not know most of the main players I would have thought the author had a vivid and twisted imagination.. Paul Martin Brown, author of *Wild Orchids of Florida* A fascinating true story of obsession, greed, and lust for the unobtainable. Reminds me a great deal of *The Maltese Falcon*. This rare flower is definitely the stuff that dreams are made of. Ace Atkins, author of *Devil's Garden* and *Infamous* Pittman has captured the extreme competition, unique characters, and general insanity that often typify the orchid world. *The Scent of Scandal* exemplifies how passion and profit can overrule common sense and the law. Scott Steward, former associate editor, *North American Native Orchid Journal* Every year more than 100,000 people visit Sarasota's Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, in large part to see its vast orchid collection, one of the most magnificent in the world. But the most famous orchid in Selby's history the one hailed as the most significant find in a century isn't on display. It's the one that led to search warrants, a grand jury investigation, and headlines around the country. Discovered in Peru in 2002, the *Phragmipedium kovachii* quickly became the most sought-after orchid in the world. Prices soared to \$10,000 on the black market and otherwise rational people bent rules and broke laws in their obsessive quest to possess it. Award-winning journalist Craig Pittman covered this fascinating story, as it happened, for the *St. Petersburg Times*, Florida's largest newspaper. In this enthralling account, he unravels the tangled web of smugglers, scientists, and federal investigators to reveal who the real criminals were in this sordid affair. He also shines a spotlight on flaws in the international treaties governing trade in endangered wildlife treaties that often protect individual plants and animals in shipping but do little to halt the destruction of whole colonies in the wild. With candid interviews from nearly everyone involved in the case, *The Scent of Scandal* unspools like a riveting mystery novel, stranger than anything in Susan Orleans *The Orchid Thief* or the film *Adaptation*. Pittman shows how some people can become so obsessed with beauty, with profit, with fame, with the desire to own a rare flower that even the possibility of going to prison will not deter their risking everything. Craig Pittman writes about environmental issues for the *St.*

Petersburg Times. He is the coauthor of *Paving Paradise: Floridas Vanishing Wetlands and the Failure of No Net Loss* and author of *Manatee Insanity: Inside the War over Floridas Most Famous Endangered Species*.

About the Author Craig Pittman is an award-winning journalist who writes about environmental issues for Floridas largest newspaper, the St. Petersburg Times. He is the coauthor of *Paving Paradise* and author of *Manatee Insanity*.