

THE SHANGHAI FREE TAXI

FRANK LANGFITT

READ BY THE AUTHOR

A sensitive yet bracingly honest portrait of the new China in a time of seismic political change

CHINA—America’s most important competitor—is at a turning point. With economic growth slowing, Chinese people face inequality and uncertainty as their leaders tighten control at home and project power abroad.


In this adventurous, original book, NPR correspondent Frank Langfitt describes how he created a free taxi service—offering rides in exchange for illuminating conversation—to go beyond the headlines and get to know a wide range of colorful, compelling characters representative of the new China. They include folks like “Beer,” a slippery salesman who tries to sell Langfitt a used car; Rocky, a farm boy turned Shanghai lawyer; and Chen, who runs an underground Christian church and moves his family to America in search of a better, freer life.

Blending unforgettable characters, evocative travel writing, and insightful political analysis, *The Shanghai Free Taxi* is a sharply observed and surprising book that will help readers make sense of the world’s other superpower.

“Frank Langfitt devised an ingenious way to burrow into everyday Chinese life, and he came back with stories that are humane, candid, fast-paced, and compulsively readable. *The Shanghai Free Taxi* gives you the marrow of today’s China in all its kindnesses and cruelties and wonders and absurdities.”

—EVAN OSNOS, National Book Award-winning author of *Age of Ambition: Chasing Fortune, Truth, and Faith in the New China*

FRANK LANGFITT has covered China for more than a decade. Before taking over as the NPR London correspondent in 2016, he spent five years as the company’s reporter based in Shanghai. From 1997 to 2002, Langfitt was the *Baltimore Sun’s* bureau chief in Beijing. Langfitt’s print and visual journalism have also been honored by the Overseas Press Association and the White House News Photographers Association. He is a graduate of Princeton and was a Nieman fellow at Harvard. Langfitt lives outside of London with his wife, Julie, and their two children.

 Playing time: 8.5 hrs • Unabridged

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