

Wilderness explorer Michael Cooper's *Miscalculated Risks* wins Best New (Debut) Non-Fiction in the 2025 AWAs

Michael Cooper recounts near-fatal encounters and hard-won lessons in this award-winning memoir of survival, resilience, and the unforgiving wild.

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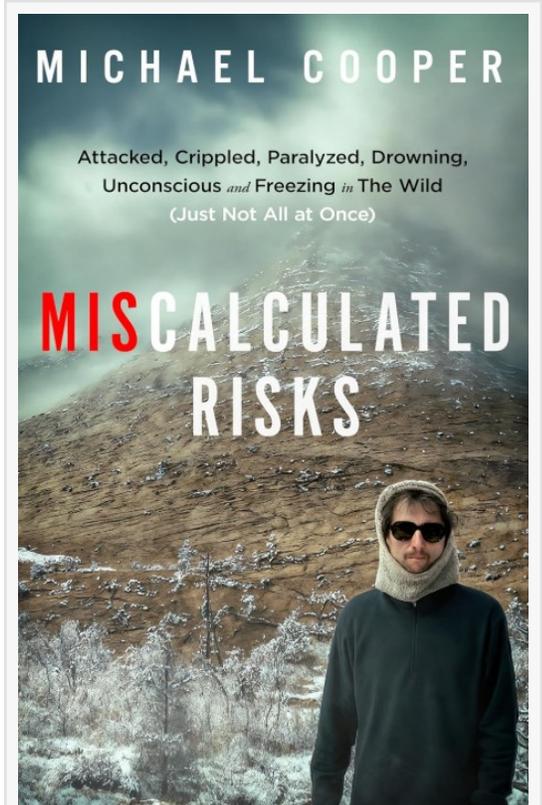
/EINPresswire.com/ -- Wilderness explorer, mountaineer, and acclaimed journalist Michael Cooper has been honored with the 2025 American Writing Awards' Best New (Debut) Non-Fiction distinction for his gripping memoir, *Miscalculated Risks: Attacked, Crippled, Paralyzed, Drowning, Unconscious and Freezing in The Wild (Just Not All at Once)*. Recently released to readers, the book blends adventure, personal reflection, and narrative nonfiction as it chronicles Cooper's near-fatal expeditions, extreme wilderness encounters, and the relentless drive that pushed him more than 8,000 miles into some of the most remote and uncharted landscapes in North America and beyond.

Across its exhilarating, often darkly humorous chapters, *Miscalculated Risks* recounts Cooper's near-death experiences:

- Mortally wounded in a Mexican jungle, twenty pathless miles from medical help
- Severely hypothermic on an isolated Oregon river, battling sixty-nine miles of rapids during a blizzard
- Deathly ill and out of water in a sun-scorched desert
- And several more life-threatening episodes that tested the limits of endurance, resolve, and luck

The memoir explores themes of wilderness survival, camaraderie, the lure of untouched landscapes, and the human drive to test boundaries—sometimes recklessly so.

Author Reflections:



MISCALCULATED RISKS BY
MICHAEL COOPER

Cooper, known for both his expeditions and his acclaimed work as a recording engineer for award-winning artists and actors, offers candid insights into his motivations:

"I always prioritized my outdoor trips over work. I hope readers will be inspired to live their dreams and won't delay in pursuing them."

"There is no reward in life without taking risks."

Early Praise for Miscalculated Risks

The memoir has already drawn significant critical acclaim:

Kirkus Reviews:

"The wilderness comes alive on the page in this (literal) trailblazer's memoir... Lovers of the outdoors and armchair travelers alike will enjoy adventuring along with him. OUR VERDICT: GET IT."

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KIRKUS REVIEWS

Midwest Book Review:

"Packed with hair-raising encounters and gripping moments of life-or-death... Nothing short of remarkable."

Jedediah S. Rogers, author of *Roads in the Wilderness*:

"Harrowing and engaging."

Courtney Purcell, author of *Zion National Park: Summit Routes*:

"Outstanding and inspiring. A beautiful story told remarkably well."

Warren C. Easley, author of *The Cal Claxton Mysteries*:



Michael Cooper rappels off Three Fingered Jack in Oregon's Cascade Range

“A masterpiece... insight into why we humans challenge ourselves with hard tasks.”

Sample Excerpts:

Cooper’s writing blends grit, lyricism, and stark immediacy:

“It was everything I had longed to see in desert backcountry: wild and empty and desolate, terribly magnificent in both its promise and threat.”

“I realized I was dying. Not just in the process, but on the razor’s edge of the binary state.”

“I felt incredibly alive, and incredibly lucky to be alive... The river had granted me safe passage.”

“We watched in silence as the setting sun cast ever-lengthening shadows, like stripes on a zebra, over the shattered moonscape...”

About the Author

Michael Cooper is a wilderness adventurer, mountaineer, and expert backcountry navigator who has traveled through over 8,000 miles of wild terrain, including areas untouched by any recorded explorer. He is also a respected recording engineer and producer, working with Academy Award-winner William Hurt, ABC World News anchor Barry Serafin, and Grammy-winning artist Ashley Cleveland.

His journalism has appeared more than 500 times across eight national and international magazines.

Learn more at: MichaelCooperAdventurer.com



Michael Cooper in the trail-less core of Zion National Park, Utah



Michael Cooper blazes a pioneering route across the trail-less core of Capitol Reef National Park

Upcoming Events & Appearances

December 7, 2025 — Portland, OR
Oregon Historical Society – 56th
Annual Celebration of Oregon
Authors

1200 SW Park Avenue | Noon–4 PM

December 10, 2025 — Sisters, OR
Invitation-only Meet the Author Event

January 10, 2026 — Sisters, OR
The Lodge – Meet the Author Event
411 E Carpenter Lane | 2–3 PM

Contact:

Michael Cooper

Email:

Michael.Cooper@larreapress.com

Website: MichaelCooperAdventurer.com

Amazon: <https://amzn.to/4nZkXKp>

Goodreads: https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/60598391.Michael_Cooper

Larrea Press: <https://soloist.ai/larreapress>



High-resolution media kit available upon request, including book cover, full jacket, headshot, and award seals.

About the American Writing Awards (AWA)

The American Writing Awards supports writers across all genres with recognition programs, marketing services, and professional development opportunities. Through partnerships, contests, and media outreach initiatives, AWA helps authors build visibility, credibility, and long-term reader engagement.

Michael Cooper

Author

Michael.Cooper@larreapress.com

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