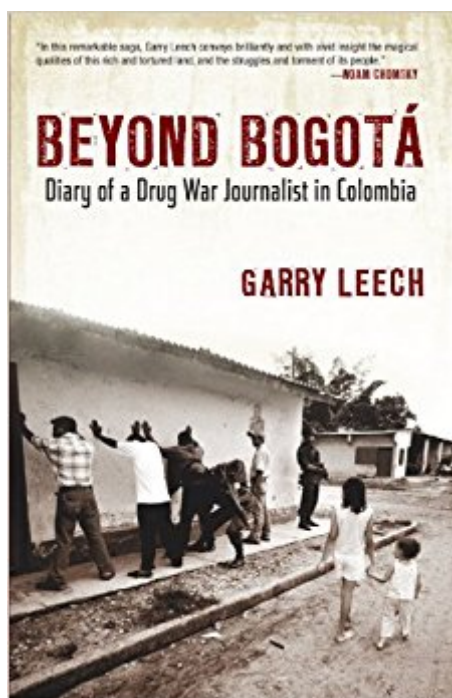


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Beyond Bogota: Diary Of A Drug War Journalist In Colombia



Synopsis

Independent journalist Garry Leech has spent the last eight years working in the most remote and dangerous regions of Colombia. Unlike other Western reporters, most of whom rarely leave Bogotá, Leech learns the truth about conflicts and the U.S. war on drugs directly from the source: farmers, male and female guerrillas, union organizers, indigenous communities, and many others. *Beyond Bogotá* is framed around the eleven hours that Leech was held captive by the FARC, Colombia's largest leftist guerrilla group, in August 2006. Drawing on unprecedented access to soldiers, guerrillas, paramilitaries, and peasants in conflict zones and cocaine-producing areas, Leech's documentary memoir is an epic tale of a journalist's search for meaning in the midst of violence and poverty. This compelling account provides fresh insights into U.S. foreign policy, the role of the media, and the plight of everyday Colombians caught in the middle of a brutal war.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In this arresting hybrid of journalism and memoir Leech relates his experiences investigating political, economic, and drug-related stories throughout Latin America. The narrative is organized into 11 chapters, which parallel the 11 hours Leech was detained by the FARC, a Colombian guerrilla group, in 2006. Each chapter begins with details of Leech's captivity, which serve as introductions to broader stories, including the civil unrest and massacres in 1980s El Salvador; his meetings with government officials and paramilitary and guerrilla groups vying for power in Panama, Colombia, and other nearby countries; and the wavering effectiveness of the U.S. war on drugs. Along the way, Leech highlights the rampant human-rights violations in the region, the fumigation of

cocaine plants, which also destroys other crops, and the large displaced civilian populations often caught in the cross fire. This enlightening book, which mixes a readable level of detail and background with personal narrative, should be in every library, public and academic. — Sarah Statz Cords, Reader's Advisor Online Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Eye-opening . . . excellent reportage — highly recommended for would-be journalists as well as those interested in geopolitics. — Kirkus Reviews "In this remarkable saga, Garry Leech conveys brilliantly and with vivid insight the magical qualities of this rich and tortured land, and the struggles and torment of its people." — Noam Chomsky "That havoc within Colombia is portrayed with angry passion by the determined Garry Leech, that now rare beast in the jungle of journalism prepared to put his own life at the service of the truth. . . . A remarkable and captivating personal account of the drug war that unfolds mostly in Colombia." — Gavin O'Toole, Latin American Review of Books

Excellent view from the ground on the realities of the 'War on Drugs' in Colombia. Makes me utterly sick to think we were dropping poison on poor farmers to stop rich college kids and hollywood stars in the U.S. from snorting powder up their noses. Throw some of the users in jail for 30 years and see how fast the 'war' ends. Which will never happen of course so why bother with the other end? The War is over, declare defeat and go home. People will do drugs, let them face the consequences themselves. I do think he goes out of his way to minimize and exculpate the actions of the FARC which is the main reason I dropped one star, which I doubt will bother Mr. Leech one bit. But for man to risk life itself to tell the story as he sees it from the actual ground is something to admire. Well done.

Interesting book for anyone interested in the Colombian drug wars and anti terrorist campaigns in the recent past. The author reports from areas that other journalists refuse to enter and lets us know the connections of the Colombian military and paramilitaries in the horrendous human rights abuses that have occurred in that country. Also discussion of the United States involvement.

I needed the information for a novel I've written and the first hand account of Colombia was perfect. I was rewarded with a piece of the world I knew little about. In America we often think drugs and

drug dealers as some group of folks in a bubble, but this side of all that business is so important. I wish many people would read this and increase their understanding of the drug business.

Fast, honest.

I found the book to pretty much on the mark, as some one who spent several years in the Central and South American area or operation, the only thing that I find disturbing is the author's options on the subject, I felt he was leaning to the left on many of the issue, while he does address many of the issues in the area, he missed the main mark. Corruption is a way of life in the area from the top to the bottom, until the Government is fixed, the issue will continue. I suggest reading "Hunting Pablo Escobar", another good read, both should be read to give thought too

A very good book probing the conflict in Colombia in a way many other journalists do not, however the author could have devoted more time to actions committed by the FARC such as car bombings and kidnappings.

I think this is a very good book about conditions in the Zonas today. A few stories seem anecdotal but by and large, it describes Colombia very well. It hasn't changed much in 40 years.

I am writing my capstone paper on the War on Drugs in the Andes, and a classmate recommended this book. I wish Leech had written it earlier, because I was looking all over for a decent summary on the War on Drugs in Colombia, and now one shows up just when I have finished the history section of the paper. At any rate, Leech provides excellent information about FARC, the paramilitaries, a mining company called Drummond, coca fumigation, the links between the Colombian army and the paramilitaries, the mainstream media, indigenous people and campesinos...and probably more that I can't remember off the top of my head. He has interviewed quite a few members of most groups (the exception being the mining company), so one gets a good feel for the attitudes of the people involved. What I find most interesting is Leech's assessment of the mainstream media. He says that most journalists do not venture far from Bogota, and so do not get the perspectives of those living in the more remote regions. He also charges (and I think rightly) that the mainstream media has paid more attention to FARC than the paramilitaries, who have done most of the killings and abuses(although he, again rightly, does not excuse FARC for committing its share of the killings and abuses).I have found this book to be quite helpful, and recommend it highly

to anyone else who wants to learn about Colombia.

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