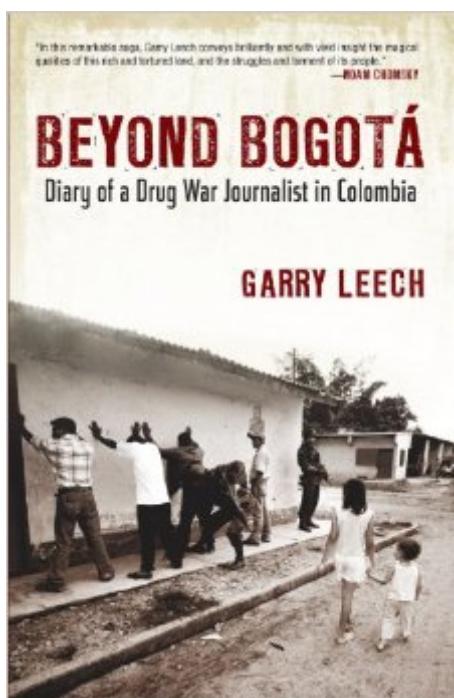


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Beyond Bogota: Diary Of A Drug War Journalist In Colombia



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

Mr. Leech has been on a multi-year mission to report on the U.S. government's "escalating role in Colombia's civil conflict and military interventions", and on the atrocities committed in Colombia's war on drugs and the FARC, Colombia's largest leftist guerrilla group. To accomplish this goal, Mr. Leech has spent most of his time in rural areas and outside of the relatively safe capital of Colombia, Bogota, where most mainstream foreign media confine themselves to. Mr. Leech believes the mainstream media report news that is predominantly influenced by the Colombian government and military, the U.S. embassy, and business elites. Once again, as has been the case in numerous other countries both in South America and elsewhere, Washington's foreign policies

are rife with militaristic reactions to undesirable conditions such as coca cultivation, and there is little done in the way of addressing the root causes of rampant illegal cocaine production and distribution which are almost always social and economic in nature. Thrown into the mix is the ill conceived and aggressive displacement of locals, often by the paramilitary forces to pave the way for multinational corporations to conduct their operations, e.g. Occidental Petroleum, Drummond Company Inc. et al. As a result, Colombia is host to the world's worst population displacement conundrum. Five billion dollars of aid and eight years of the controversial Plan Colombia announced by then president Bill Clinton has failed to reduce cocaine production. Plan Colombia was originally proposed by Colombian President Andres Pastrana in 1999. With the U.S. involvement and aid to Colombia's government, the focus quickly shifted to counternarcotics and the strengthening and utilization of military forces. Unfortunately, Mr.

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