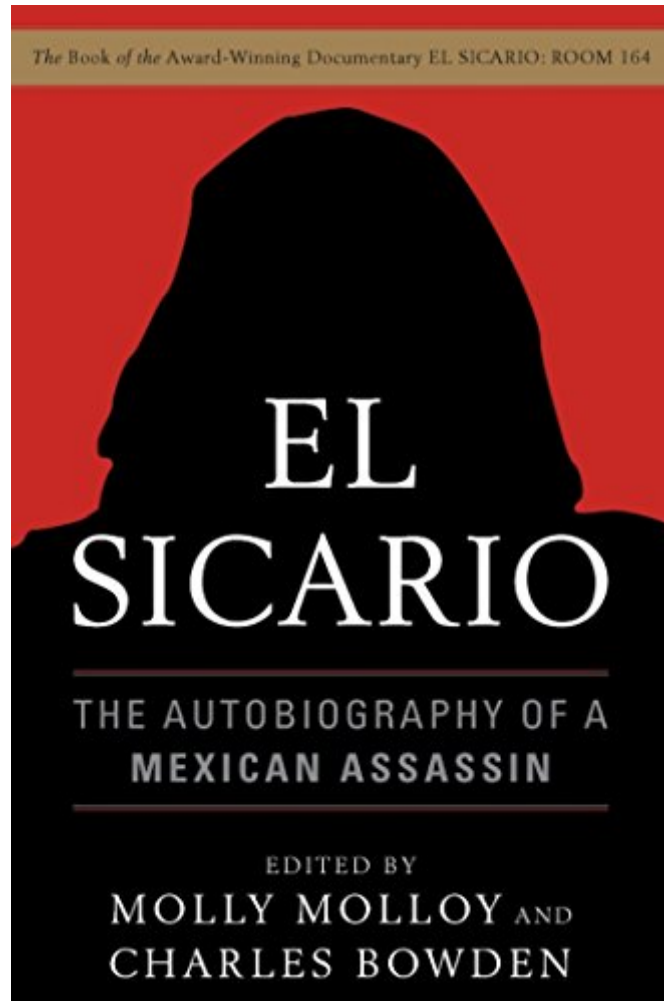


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El Sicario: The Autobiography Of A Mexican Assassin



Synopsis

In this unprecedented and chilling monologue, a repentant Mexican hitman tells the unvarnished truth about the war on drugs on the American. El Sicario is the hidden face of America's war on drugs. He is a contract killer who functioned as a commandante in the Chihuahuan State police, who was trained in the US by the FBI, and who for twenty years kidnapped, tortured and murdered people for the drug industry at the behest of Mexican drug cartels. He is a hit man who came off the killing fields alive. He left the business and turned to Christ. And then he decided to tell the story of his life and work. Charles Bowden first encountered El Sicario while reporting for the book "Murder City". As trust between the two men developed, Bowden bore witness to the Sicario's unfolding confession, and decided to tell his story. The well-spoken man that emerges from the pages of El Sicario is one who has been groomed by poverty and driven by a refusal to be one more statistic in the failure of Mexico. He is not boastful, he claims no major standing in organized crime. But he can explain in detail not only torture and murder, but how power is distributed and used in the arrangement between the public Mexican state and law enforcement on the ground - where terror and slaughter are simply tools in implementing policy for both the police and the cartels. And he is not an outlaw or a rebel. He is the state. When he headed the state police anti-kidnapping squad in Juarez, he was also running a kidnapping ring in Juarez. When he was killing people for money in Juarez, he was sharpening his marksmanship at the Federal Police range. Now he lives in the United States as a fugitive. One cartel has a quarter million dollar contract on his head. Another cartel is trying to recruit him. He speaks as a free man and of his own free will - there are no charges against him. He is a lonely voice - no one with his background has ever come forward and talked. He is the future - there are thousands of men like him in Mexico and there will be more in other places. He is the truth no one wants to hear.

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Customer Reviews

"El Sicario" gives us a voice reaching out from the violent landscape of modern Mexico. This is an unforgettable account of one man's life as an assassin, a predator for the cartels which have turned some of Mexico's border areas into war zones, and in his life we see the development and evolution of today's Mexico roughly from the 1980s to the present. There have been some good books recently published on the current drug war raging in our neighbor across the Rio Grande, including John Gibler's recent "To Die In Mexico" and especially "Murder City" by Charles Bowden, who interviewed the former assassin for a documentary and edited their conversations into this book, this is one of the best because instead of just statistics and figures, it gives us a pure form of journalism in the form of one man's testimony. "El Sicario" is a raw trip into the heart of darkness. The Sicario divides his life into three basic sections: His childhood, his introduction to the cartel lifestyle as a young adult and finally his eventual exit from the cartel world, choosing to convert to Pentacostal Christianity of the variety so popular among Hispanic communities. There is a strange elegance to the way the Sicario guides us through each section, there is no attempt here to be flashy or "literary" and yet the words in their raw form have real power and pull. Unlike the flashy tales one gets in gangster movies like "Scarface," the Sicario's tale begins with humble roots in the typical, poverty-ridden surroundings of working class Mexicans, he describes his family and a father who worked to death to barely provide essentials. In a powerful moment the Sicario describes his one happy memory of a family outing: To the circus where they couldn't afford luxury snacks.

This book is the paper version of a dialogue conducted by the Italian documentary film maker, Gianfranco Rossi. My understanding of how Mr. Rossi became engaged in this effort was that border writer, Charles Bowden, who has written before about life on the American-Mexican Border, worked with Professor Molly Melloy, New Mexico State University, in Las Cruces, New

Mexico, to debrief "el sicario," on his involvement over 20 years time in the killing of numerous individuals who came up on the wrong side of the Juarez Cartel. Of key interest to me were the roots of corrupt Mexican police law enforcement practices as enveloped by various drug cartel leadership in Juarez, Chihuahua, Mexico. Living roughly 70 miles north of Palomas, Chihuahua, and about 100 miles west of Juarez, I've seen the change in the Mexican Border towns & cities over the last 9.5 years that I've lived in New Mexico. Until 2007, going to Mexico seemed pretty easy, although I had very significant prejudices against such travel because of the "flim flam/shady" nature of Mexican law enforcement. In the first 5 years I lived here, the flim flammings were essentially shaking down Americans on put up charges of some kind designed to shake down the tourists for some kind of bribe or payment to "not get into trouble." I'd been to Mexico, to the surrender site of Geronimo, the Apache warrior, in 2007. At that time, we heard that a major fire fight had occurred farther west in Cananea, Sonora. The reason for that fight was a turf battle between drug cartels. That seemed to exemplify the situation in Mexico in 2007. Since then, however, the slaughter in Chihuahua, Sonora, Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, and various other Mexican states has escalated into a horror show exemplified by decapitations & dismemberment of bodies.

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