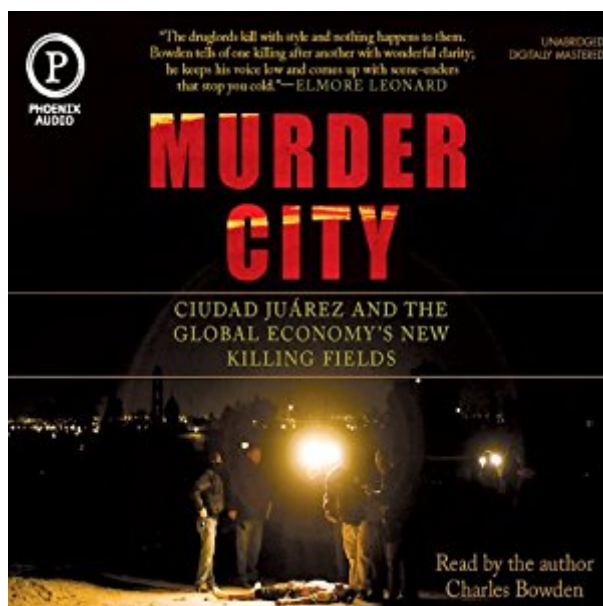


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Murder City: Ciudad Juárez And The Global Economy's New Killing Fields



Synopsis

Ciudad Juárez lies just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. A once-thriving border town, it now resembles a failed state. Infamously known as the place where women disappear, its murder rate exceeds that of Baghdad or Mogadishu. In *Murder City*, Charles Bowden has written an extraordinary account of what happens when a city disintegrates. Interweaving stories of its inhabitants--a raped beauty queen, a repentant hit man, a journalist fleeing for his life--with a broader meditation on the town's descent into anarchy, Bowden reveals how Juárez's culture of violence will not only worsen but inevitably spread north. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Eye opening. Disturbing. Scary as hell. Truly tragic. An exploration of some of the true life horrors taking place, and the tragic reality that no one seems to care it is happening. Media lies, government cover-ups. This is a book that does not sugar coat the real truth. It does not promote the untruth that is forced down people's throats, this book lays it out, blunt, descriptive, horrifying, and in your face. Bowden is unapologetic. He is to the point. He is not scared to speak the truth, write the reality that is happening. This is a book that everyone should read so that truth can be experienced and not the cover-ups, lies that are so rampant. *Murder City* is a book that is brutally honest. Most of the chapters are laid out in a fashion like your reading someone's thoughts, or a journal entry of the day, and news that has happened. The book really has no structure which makes it all the more unique and interesting, but most of all brutal because of its lack of sanity, because what is written, and talked about, and

explored is true insanity, yet that insanity is all reality. A perfection in reporting. Very intense. Dark. Twisted, and yet it flows like an average report of a day in the life of a victim, or at least those left behind to experience the victim. I've never done any kind of drug deal in my life. But I've loaned out scales to friends who felt differently. So drop the notions you carry about who is clean and not clean. Who is honest or dishonest will get you closer to reality.

• Page 80

It's an interesting subject for the book but the writing style takes some getting used to. Bowden writes the whole book in what are essentially bulleted paragraphs jumping from topic to topic and jerking the reader around though he often circles back to same issues which give some sense of continuation through the book. Bowden does a great job telling a story of corruption but his writing style leaves the reader wondering what is fiction and what isn't. Is this a piece of nonfiction or a literary description of Juarez. Bowden tries to do both and doesn't quite pull it off. His book makes me want to read more on the subject but not by him.

Having completed the book and after watching a documentary where the author plays a role... I am more fascinated by the phenomena (if that is really an appropriate word) of what is happening in the Juarez/El Paso area (and northern Mexico)... I'm just at a loss, this book baffles me more than anything... it is as if he started writing in order to try to find out what he meant, what he understands, what he thinks about what is happening, but has failed. Who knows maybe it is indicative of how complex and convoluted the issues are... I saw sicario last weekend and thought continually about this book and how I hoped for insight but only got a kind of addled reporting of facts and impressions... I gave the book 4 stars... it probably deserves 1 or 2.. it is a mess as a book... but, because the witness lived... I give it 4.

I can sympathize with readers who were irritated or bored by this book. It wasn't the book they wanted. I think it's fair to assume they were looking for a narrative history and a more straightforward polemic. I'm sure Bowden could deliver that but the thing is he didn't want to. He let's you know that American policy is a catastrophe, the war on drugs lost, the Mexican establishment hopelessly corrupt and senses it's not enough to say all this over and over again. Coherent narrative won't do it. We have a coherent narrative that's all about drug gangs fighting for turf, and while not totally incorrect, it's actually a small part of the story. What makes the book gruesomely exciting is Bowden's insistence that Mexico in general, and Juarez in particular, have degenerated into a

Hobbesian societies in which there is a war of all against all. An insane spiral of violence has gripped the city and it feeds on itself. Oh there is a kind of rationality to it. People want money, power, sex, drugs, possibly rock and roll but it's the kind of rationality that will make you think kindly of R.D. Laing or Aldous Huxley in his Island phase. In another words if this is sanity, it's only the insane who have it right. So what Bowden gives you is a series of disjointed, gruesome horrors. Your narrative will not work. First get the picture. So you are given murder after murder, rape after rape. At first it is grimly fascinating. Gradually it gets boring and numbing. I suspect that is what Bowden goes through in researching and writing about this. I give him a lot of credit for his potentially alienating relentlessness. It's called for. Yes, the book drags at times but it succeeds in what it's is. This is an "artsy" book in stylistic terms but it is most assuredly not art for arts sake. It is a book that is a scream. Bowden doesn't strike me as an especially genial fellow. (although he does laugh a fair amount in radio interviews but those are the kind of laughs death might deliver in THE SEVENTH SEAL). He wants you to stop kidding yourself about certain aspects of contemporary reality and he is persuasive to a considerable degree. Even if you disagree with him on any number of things, which I do, I can't imagine after reading this book you could walk away and say, why let's pour a few billion more into the Mexican police and military. That will really straighten things out!

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