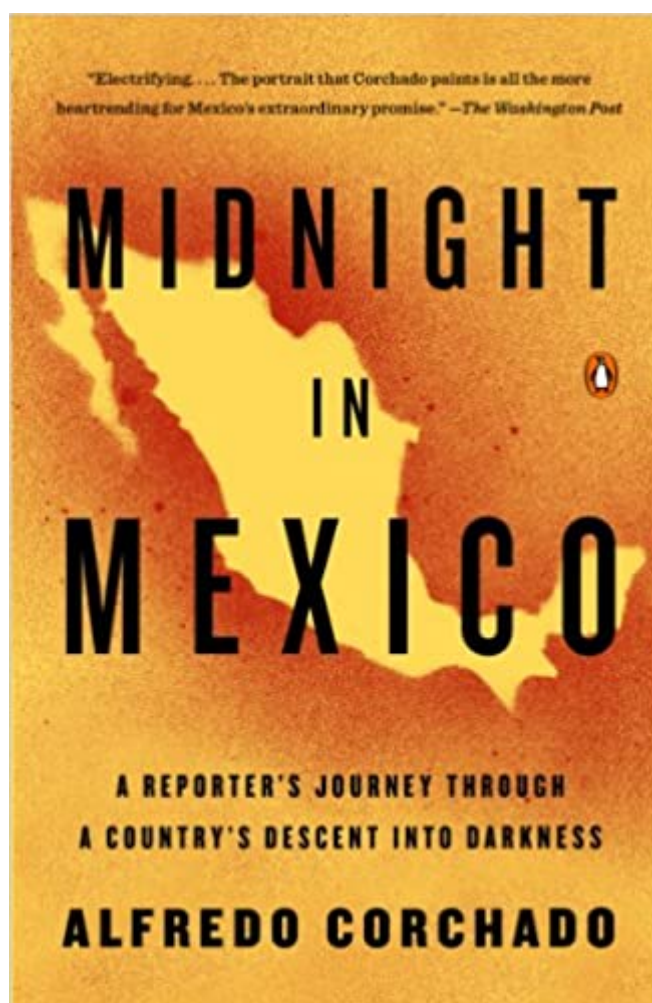


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Midnight In Mexico: A Reporter's Journey Through A Country's Descent Into Darkness



Synopsis

A crusading Mexican-American journalist searches for justice and hope in an increasingly violent Mexico. In the last decade, more than 100,000 people have been killed or disappeared in the Mexican drug war, and drug trafficking there is a multibillion-dollar business. In a country where the powerful are rarely scrutinized, noted Mexican-American journalist Alfredo Corchado refuses to shrink from reporting on government corruption, murders in Juárez, or the ruthless drug cartels of Mexico. One night, Corchado received a tip that he could be the next target of the Zetas, a violent paramilitary group—and that he had twenty-four hours to find out if the threat was true. *Midnight in Mexico* is the story of one man's quest to report the truth of his country as he races to save his own life.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Praise for Alfredo Corchado's *Midnight in Mexico*: "Electrifying the portrait that Corchado paints is all the more heartrending for Mexico's extraordinary promise... Security and the drug war that are Mexico's biggest worries watching Corchado struggle in the crucible, trying to do the right thing by his two homelands, one can't help being reminded the dawn that will follow this 'midnight in Mexico' will come only if we take some of the responsibility. The health of this neighbor is integral to our own." — *Washington Post* "Corchado looks at Mexico's darkest hour. And doesn't blink." — Alan Cheuse, *Dallas Morning News* "A riveting account that features many of the places and personalities that have been central to Mexico's recent nightmare Corchado is a dogged and savvy journalist who manages to be

everywhere a good reported should be. A unique binational perspective on the two countries he calls home, expressing admiration for the determination of U.S. and Mexican officials to fight a shared problem by taking on shared responsibility.

•San Francisco Chronicle "[Corchado's] solid research and detailed understanding of the forces at work there make the book an important one for anyone who cares about Mexico, and his personal struggle with his homeland make it a raw, compelling read."

•Miami Herald "The secret revealed at [Midnight in Mexico's] conclusion is more compelling than Citizen Kane. 'Rosebud' won't spoil the ending here, but you will shiver when you get there, and you may even weep. Either way, you will understand Corchado's need to stay in Mexico and his need to bring us stories that we need to read."

•Texas Observer "An excellent, first-hand description of what a journalist must endure to report critically on Mexico."

•El Paso Times "Having lived and reported through four presidencies, his own story is emblematic. People are willing to do anything about Latin America other than read about it, or so it's been said. This is one book about Latin America that merits attention."

•Kirkus "This book is about the blood-drenched borderlands that divide Alfredo Corchado's two countries, Mexico and the United States, which still dominate his own life. Told against the backdrop of the horrifically violent drug wars that have turned much of Mexico into a charnel land, Corchado shares his own story and that of his family with a moving degree of honesty and acuity. Corchado's love for his immigrant family and pride in what they have achieved is palpable, yet weighted down by a sense of what they, and Mexico, may have lost forever in the exchange. In many ways, *Midnight in Mexico* stands as a raw, real-life parable for the paradoxes of the Mexican-American experience, and it is both a riveting and gut-wrenching read."

•Jon Lee Anderson, author of *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life* and *The Fall of Baghdad* "Midnight in Mexico is the story of a journalist's dangerous and notable efforts to report on Mexico's horrible drug wars. The book brings a special clarity, the clarity of the personal and particular, to a very important and confusing subject, and it is in itself an absorbing story, marked by careful attention to fact and also by the author's deep love for his homeland. Mr. Corchado is the kind of reporter and writer who revives one's faith in journalism."

•Tracy Kidder, Pulitzer Prize winning author of *Strength in What Remains* "Anyone who wants to learn about Mexico on the inside, especially how the United States affects it, illegally and legally, will learn much from this sharply perceptive and moving account."

•John Womack Jr., Robert Woods Bliss Professor of Latin American History and Economics, Harvard University "Alfredo Corchado is the top American journalist covering Mexico today. His life embodies the complex blending of the U.S. and Mexico."

Corchado's knowledge of the Mexican political system, the drug trade, and modern Mexican society is non-pareil." •Howard Campbell, author of Drug War Zone "One of the keenest observers of Mexico today, Corchado tells his story of Mexico, of the hope of its democratic opening, of the often despair at its violence, and of its ever closer ties with his other country, the United States." •Shannon K. O'Neill, Senior Fellow for Latin American Studies, Council on Foreign Relations "Anyone interested in what is happening and has happened in Mexico for the past six years must read this book. We can call what is happening in Mexico a "drug war" but that phrase cheapens the politics and the economics that govern the relationship between the United States and Mexico. I believe *Midnight in Mexico* will become one of the most necessary books about the Mexican-American experience in this country. More than a journalist, Alfredo Corchado is the real thing, a voice that represents millions of people." •Benjamin Alire Saenz, American Book Award winning author of *Calendar of Dust*

Alfredo Corchado is a Nieman, Woodrow Wilson, and Rockefeller fellow and the Mexico bureau chief of the Dallas Morning News. In 2000, he was the first reporter granted an interview with then newly-elected president Vicente Fox. He lives in Mexico City.

First and foremost, the book is worth reading as Mr. Corchado brings invaluable insight into the drug wars in Mexico. He was clearly influenced by Peter Robb's excellent 5 star book "Midnight in Sicily" about the Mafia in Italy. My reservation is one of hyping and trumping. The difference between the books is that Mr. Corchado puts himself so in the middle of the story via the threats on his life (which I know were real, terrifying and endangered him and people he cares about) he loses perspective a little bit. By that I mean there is a difference between somebody writing about the Excellent Cadavers vs somebody writing about themselves as an Excellent Cadaver so to speak. It is tricky, and God bless him for what he went through and putting it to paper, but there is a clumsiness to writing about yourself in the eye of storm.

A powerful and amazing book about Mexico is written with the blood, sweat and tears of someone who knows Mexico as it once was and as it now is--a story experienced and told from the inside out and from the outside in. I lived in Mexico off and on for ten years. I certainly never got close to the dark side, although I always knew it was there and felt it getting stronger as the demand for drugs in the US continued to grow (and it was that dark side that made me say my final "adios"). Alfredo

Corchado exposes the dark side of the cartel wars, the political corruption, the horrific violence that lurk both below the surface but that too often explode above it for all to see in all of its bloody glory. He is honest and insightful, never backing away from the truth (and he has gotten as close to it as anyone who has lived to tell about it). Corchado is an excellent writer who expresses himself with a journalist's precision but also with a humanist's powerful voice. The book touched me profoundly, as a poignant lament for a Mexico that once was, and as a yearning for a Mexico that once again could be. A must read for anyone who loves Mexico.

An interesting read which takes you down the path of Mexico's fall into the dark rule of the Cartels. Insightful and well written, the author insures that the reader understands the dynamics and the intertwining interests of the drug cartels, the government, the authorities and the population. However, it doesn't delve into the author's mishap which is him being targeted by a Cartel for his involvement in writing articles about the drug business in Mexico. That's one reason I purchased the book, to read about his quandary and how he resolved it to end up writing this book. Be warned, his work is more about his love for Mexico and an explanation of why it has descended into this deep quagmire of violence and corruption which exists there today.

With *Midnight in Mexico*, Alfredo Corchado has composed a compelling narrative that is part memoir, part history, part sociology, and part psychology. An accomplished newspaper reporter, the foreign correspondent in Mexico for *The Dallas Morning News*, Corchado uses his own life and a death threat upon it as the framework to tell us about the drug cartel wars in Mexico. His tale reads like a novel, probably because it is all too true, and we who haven't experienced this sort of thing have a hard time believing that such things take place in the world and certainly not in a country right at our back door. The corruption, murder, and torture that Corchado reports is very real, and we feel his fear while trying to unravel the mystery of who is trying to kill him. But we also feel his anguish. A Mexican native who grew up in the US, Corchado is drawn back to his homeland, and despite the evils there, the threats there, he finds it hard to leave. This is a man who dearly loves Mexico. So this book is not only a true crime thriller but is also a love story, a tale of a man in love with a country. A man who doesn't quite understand its attraction, but he loves it, nevertheless. *Midnight in Mexico* is not a dry, sociological analysis of Mexico's problems; it is a heartfelt look at a country that has heart and should be great, but isn't.

I'm with the reviewer who said this book was "unreadable." Yes, it's a memoir, but one that blends Corchado's love of his tierra natal (birthplace) and insight into its terrifying dark side. For the critics who mocked his personal accounts - the who and where - IMO this is what makes the book easy to read. There are plenty of more scholarly books about the narco-trade; this one explains things at an easier level. Throughout, I kept hoping that the author was still alive. I needed to wait until I had finished the book before Googling him. I also listened to his voice in a radio interview (interspersed with some of his favorite songs). I heard that he was (is?) in a good news/bad news situation. The good news is that your status as a U.S. journalist offers a certain level of protection (a subsequent US investigation could cause inconveniences to the narco organizations); the bad news is that you don't look like a North American - you look Mexican!

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