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Dirty Secrets, Dirty War: The Exile Of Robert J. Cox (Buenos Aires, Argentina: 1976-1983)



Synopsis

From 1976-1983, an estimated 30,000 people disappeared in Argentina. They were victims of the Dirty War a brutal campaign designed by the government to root out possible subversives. Those suspected of being dissidents were kidnapped and taken to secret detention centers. Most were tortured and then killed never seen again. Robert J. Cox, editor of the Buenos Aires Herald, did what few others were willing to do he told the truth about what was happening. Every day his newspaper reported on the kidnappings and killings. He challenged those in power asking questions and demanding answers. Cox's commitment to reporting the truth made him a hero to the families of the disappeared, but an enemy of the state. This is the remarkable story of one man's courage in the face of adversity. It is the story of a man dedicated to protecting the freedom of the press and to protecting his family. It is the story of those who disappeared and the man who stayed in order to tell their stories. Cox's story is told by his son David who grew up under the pall of terrorism, but was inspired by his father's great courage to write what was true. He has written the book that his father could not.

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Customer Reviews

David Cox is the son of Robert J. Cox, former editor of the Buenos Aires Herald and one of the few journalists courageous enough to report on the many disappearances and horrific violence that took place during Argentina's guerra sucia. David, 13 years old when his father and the rest of the family finally fled Argentina after years of close scrapes, here presents the memoir his father, writing in the foreword, admits that he still finds too painful to author himself. Punctuating his historical

narrative of the escalating conflict with affectionate anecdotes about his large, tight-knit, and literary family, Cox the son wavers between nostalgia for the Buenos Aires of his childhood and flashbacks of the terrifying episodes that ultimately pressed the family to leave. But this book's true focus is Cox the father, who emerges as an emblem of journalistic courage, suffering anxiety and asthma with silent tenacity while reporting on human-rights violations (and in some cases, causing the disappeared to be freed). An important primary source for Latin American history collections, this account is also sure to inspire budding journalists. --Brendan Driscoll

We all in the Foreign Ministry thank you for being brave, for being honest, for speaking out when most of your colleagues remained silent. --FEDERICO MIRRE, Argentine Foreign Ministry, now Argentine Ambassador to the United Kingdom... a riveting tale. --Publishers Weekly
A legendary figure. --BILL MONTALBANO, Miami Herald

My husband and I traveled to Argentina from late December to early January 1985-86. Buenos Aires was our jumping off place for Patagonia and other southern parts of this spectacular land. We've visited there three times since. While there, we could not help but be aware that just a very few years before we visited, enormous cruelty had been regularly visited upon these talented, generous people. Since then, we've read a great deal about the very troubled history of Argentina where, as in so many South American countries, the military has believed it had a God-given right to meddle in government affairs. And of course, in Argentina, the military WAS the government during much of the "Dirty War." Regarding the book, David Cox captures the beauty, and irony of life during the years of the Dirty War, and before. His father, Robert Cox, newspaper editor, was determined to stay in Buenos Aires, daring to report in his paper what no other could report, including the disappearance of 30,000 individuals, kidnapped from their homes, most never to be seen again. This in a sophisticated, supposedly cultured society. Could it happen again? Robert Cox was incredibly brave. David, his son, is a remarkable story teller. I highly recommend this book. It holds lessons for all.

Having read several books about Argentina's Dirty War, this one was eye-opening and quite informative. I learned things about the conflict from this book that I hadn't encountered in other larger narratives. The family element is something that I really enjoyed. While I understand why some would say that the writing is "uneven" or that there is too much about the family background, I would respond by stating that this is closer to a biography than a strict history of the years in

question. Getting a glimpse into the Cox family and their own turmoil during the era was chilling. It is, indeed, the real history of the conflict because larger historical events are best understood by reading how individual people were affected by them. I really enjoyed reading the actual editorials that Cox bravely printed in the Buenos Aires Herald during the full onslaught of the Argentine military against its own citizens. Ironically, (because the story is about a newspaper editor), there were several typos and repeated paragraphs in the book so someone failed to edit this book well. This, however, was not enough to remove a star from my review. This book is still a 5-star story about a true hero, Robert J. Cox.

Having read a good bit about this era and somewhat of Argentina particularly during the dirty war, i still found some insights that made the book worth reading particularly regarding the split in the junta as to implementing the illegal tactics. Though short, there is too much useless filler and digression about the writer's family that needlessly slows the book's pace.

An icon in the struggle for human rights in the Dirty War era of Argentina, this biography of Robert Cox is written by his son David. The author's intimacy with his subject is both a strength and a weakness. It does veer into the realm of hagiography at times, but Robert Cox was such a noble figure that the reader can forgive the author this understandable weakness. An admirable subject who exemplifies journalistic integrity.

Concise, objective and entertaining account of a very dark period in Argentine history. A must read for anyone with an interest in understanding this very complex yet so appealing country. A first class journalistic job, and an homage to Robert Cox, an unrelenting and solitary fighter for freedom and the rule of law when we most needed someone like him.

Not quite at the standard of Jacobo Timerman, but very close. Clearly written by someone who knows how to write.

Interesting for those wanting first-hand account of Argentina's Dirty War.

Interesting story, but unevenly written.

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