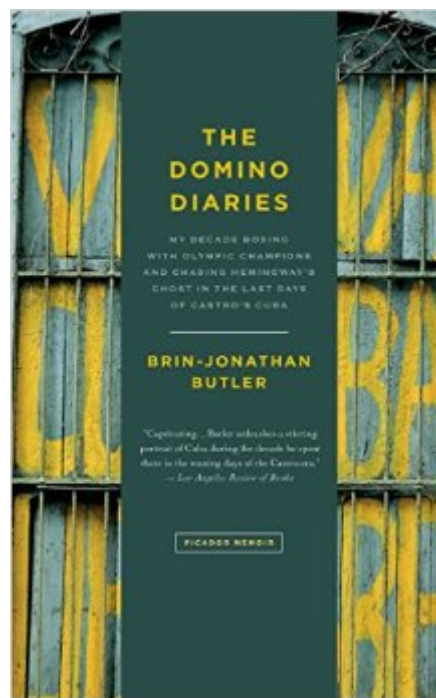


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# The Domino Diaries: My Decade Boxing With Olympic Champions And Chasing Hemingway's Ghost In The Last Days Of Castro's Cuba



## Synopsis

A powerful and lively work of immersive journalism, Brin-Jonathan Butler's account of his time chasing the American dream through Cuba—whether he's hustling his way into Mike Tyson's mansion for an interview, betting his life savings on a boxing match (against the favorite), becoming romantically entangled with one of Fidel Castro's granddaughters, or simply manufacturing press credentials to go where he wants—Brin-Jonathan Butler has always been the exact first, ask permission later kind of journalist. *The Domino Diaries* is the culmination of Butler's decade spent in the trenches of Havana, trying to understand a culture perplexing to westerners: one whose elite athletes regularly forgo multimillion-dollar opportunities to stay in Cuba and box for their country, while living in penury. Butler's fascination with this distinctly Cuban idealism sets him off on a remarkable journey, training with, befriending, and interviewing the champion boxers that Cuba seems to produce more than any other country. In the process, though, Butler gets to know the landscape of the exhilaratingly warm Cuban culture—and starts to question where he feels most at home. In the tradition of Michael Lewis and John Jeremiah Sullivan, Butler is a keen and humane storyteller, and the perfect guide for this riotous tour through the streets of Havana.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I love this book for many reasons. Brin-Jonathan Butler writes a beautiful account of Cuba's final years in the US boycott. As US-Cuban relations improve by the day, the time capsule that has been Havana since 1959 will soon be a thing of the past. Butler brings the reader into this world unknown

to most in the US. It's also an intelligent memoir with chapters that begin with quotes from various works of literature. He writes about Hemingway's Cuba, which--as Butler informs the reader--was surprisingly bereft of politics, unlike Hemingway's previous stints abroad. And there's also the boxing part, which is more a personal account of people who have choices to leave it all behind for obscene amounts of money. Some boxers he met outside Cuba have defected, while others he met on the island decided to stay. The end of the book reads like a thriller. I also appreciated his personal story before and during his trips to Cuba. Too often memoirists don't delve into their own stories, but that's not the case in "The Domino Diaries." This book is special because it appeals to men, women, sports fans, and people who can't be bothered with sports.

This is an excellent book. It reads almost like a blend of Paul Theroux's travel writing, mixed with Hemingway's economical athletic prose and Leonard Gardner's illuminations of the under privileged. It's brilliant and you need not be a fan of boxing or Cuba to enjoy it.

Brin is an amazing storyteller. This book seamlessly weaves together his encounters with boxing luminaries such as Mike Tyson, Teofilo Stevenson and Guillermo Rigondeaux and his own backstory as he makes his way through Cuba chasing the ghost of Hemingway and filming his boxing documentary. Each vignette is powerful, informative and modern journalism at its stunning best. If this book doesn't make you want to visit Cuba - I don't know what will. Highly, highly recommend.

A Left Hook and Upper Cut. Very very very good. I grew up in Miami and my husband's family used to live in Cuba, we both agree this is one of the best books we've read about Cuba, the people and Sport: mano a mano.

I was fortunate enough to be introduced to another book by Brin-Jonathan Butler, (SIC), about 10 years ago and I was instantly hooked. His style is unique, colorful, raw, and real. This is a man with soul, and I would read a toaster oven owners manual cover to cover if he wrote it. Add Domino Diaries to your collection and be the envy of all your friends.

I loved it. Wonderful exposure to Cuba and boxing.

Brin-Jonathan Butler is a keen observer who makes everything seem new. He's the perfect

companion to explore the endlessly fascinating and disturbing world of boxing, and so much more.

Read it!

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