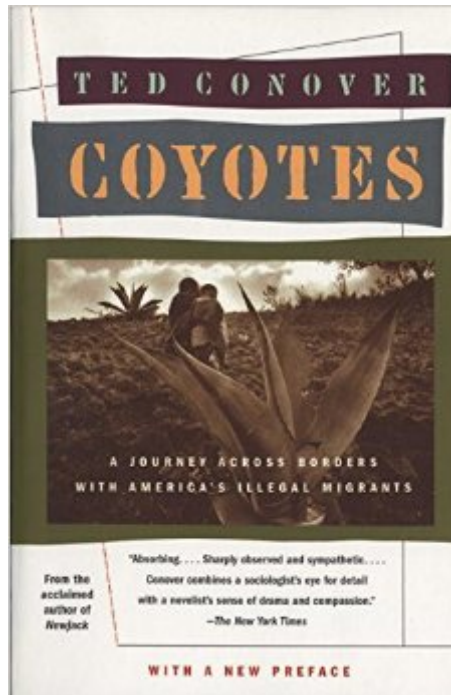


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Coyotes: A Journey Across Borders With America's Illegal Aliens



Synopsis

The compelling adventure of a young writer who poses as a Mexican wetback to discover the hardships, fear and camaraderie of illegal aliens crossing the border to work in the United States.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Having recently read NEWJACK: GUARDING SING SING, I was motivated to look into other Conover works. The impression he left with Newjack was to be reinforced by the flawless COYOTES. Conover, the author, goes where no American would dare. He befriends and lives along side Mexican immigrants who cross the border every year to find agricultural jobs. He details several occasions of crossing the border, a series of hardships and dangers. In his tales the reader is given first hand accounts of brutal Mexican police, pesky immigration officers, and the ruthless and dangerous coyotes who smuggle illegals over the border and throughout the border territories. For Conover, interviews were not enough, he walked more than a few miles in their shoes. Not only does Conover do the adrenaline pumping crossings but he lives life on both sides of the border. He spends season in citrus groves in Arizona, California, and Florida. He spends the offseason in a mountainous Mexican rancho, among what most of us would consider poverty. Through it all he does a moving and mesmerizing job of painting the picture of the migrant worker. The book is more than investigative non-fiction, it is a flowing story, encompassing a struggle few have accurately documented. The book reads fast, simultaneously entertaining and interesting the reader. This stands as a favorite in any non-fiction collection. Five stars and then some.

Conover travels with various groups of illegal immigrants and immerses himself in their world. His firsthand accounts cover an impressively broad set of immigrant experiences--the small Mexican towns filled with adventure-seeking youth, journeys to the border, negotiations with smugglers, run-ins with police, finding work in the U.S., and adjusting to a new life. Through it all, Conover maintains his point of view as a middle-class American Everyman, making the book accessible to the average Joe. Yet he always keeps his eyes and ears open to the people and events he encounters. The book makes it apparent that a criminal industry of smugglers, thieves and corrupt cops has sprung up to take advantage of cash-carrying immigrants before they even leave Mexico. Meanwhile, the relatively small Border Patrol is spread too thin to turn back all but a few crossers, who with a little persistence can try their luck the next night. Though the media tends to portray illegal immigrants as simply the latest generation of noble achievers looking for the American Dream, Conover's work shows how the current wave of immigration from Mexico is different. The new immigrants are often more loyal to their homeland than to their adopted country, travel back and forth with ease, and can find ethnic comfort zones where they can make American dollars but never have to learn American culture. The book describes events that happened in the mid-1980s, but it's more timely than ever as continued high immigration levels keep this issue on the front burner.

This book was both moving & thought provoking as it explains just a few illegal immigration stories. What you realize by the end of the book is that these are more than stories...these are people's lives. Filled with all the feeling and emotion that REAL PEOPLE experience, the reader comes to know that these experiences aren't just another immigration story filled with all its hardships and obstacles. It's about loss, yearning, looking forward to the future, friendships, and the upstanding of people you have no reason to trust. A definite good read.

I bought this book in an effort to learn more about the Hispanic in my community and state (Colorado). With 8 million illegal immigrants in the US, this book is a must read for anyone wanting to truly study these people and their culture and motivation in coming to el Norte. There are numerous parts of the book that dramatically questions your views on immigration. The fact that many of them only come up north for a few months each year was one of them; many of us believe that the majority of the illegals move here permanently. These are a hard working people who take our worst jobs, do it very well and have to hide in hidden trailers in the middle of an orchard with

none of the support structures that we take for granted. While his stories are exciting, watch carefully for his description of the difference between the 'gringos' and the 'chickens'; they reveal a lot about both cultures. I will never drive by a fruit orchard on the Western Slope again without wondering about the city of illegals hidden amongst the trees doing the same thing I am; trying to make a good living for my family. Finally, it is a great source for lot's of Mexican slang - just be careful where and how you use it! Great Read - this one stays on my bookshelf while others go to the used bookstore. A great Quote from the foreward: "...the terms of the debate have tended to dehumanize the Mexicans, turning them from people into "illegal aliens". But because we as Americans control their destiny in so many ways, it is urgent that we know more about these people who ask little more than to wash our dishes, vacuum our cars and pick our fruit".

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