



Blood Diamonds: Tracing the Path of the World's Most Precious Stones

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The true story of the events that inspired the feature film Blood Diamond First discovered in 1930, the diamonds of Sierra Leone have funded one of the most savage rebel campaigns in modern history. These "blood diamonds" are smuggled out of West Africa and sold to legitimate diamond merchants in London, Antwerp, and New York, often with the complicity of the international diamond industry. Eventually, these very diamonds find their way into the rings and necklaces of brides the world over. Blood Diamonds is the gripping story of how diamond smuggling works, how the rebel war has effectively destroyed Sierra Leone and its people, and how the policies of the diamond industry--institutionalized in the 1880s by the De Beers cartel--have allowed it to happen. Award-winning journalist Greg Campbell traces the deadly trail of these diamonds, many of which are brought to the world market by fanatical enemies. The repercussions of diamond smuggling are felt far beyond the poor and war-ridden country of Sierra Leone, and the consequences of overlooking this African tragedy are both shockingly deadly and unquestionably global.

Blood Diamonds: Tracing the Path of the World's Most Precious Stones Details

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From Reader Review Blood Diamonds: Tracing the Path of the World's Most Precious Stones for online ebook

Daniel says

Don't buy a diamond, EVER.

No gemstone is worth children having their arms chopped off for sport. This book details the exploitative diamond trade and civil wars, centered in Sierra Leone and the neighboring countries. It is staggering how the evils of this massive industry begin in dark caves across Africa and end up in the hands of countless couples as they buy their wedding rings from local jewelers around the world.

The prologue is the most important part of the book and should be required for everyone everywhere as it details the size and scope of the diamond trade and the immense bloodshed that has resulted in Sierra Leone. Greg Campbell is a journalist and his writing style reflects this. The only part of the book that annoyed me was his references to himself throughout the text. He flowed between sharing memories of various encounters he had with straight reporting. Blood Diamonds is excellent and it highlights many things that need to have a bigger place in our collective consciousness.

Mary Catherine Pace says

An incredibly complex history and tragic consequences of a bloody trade in an intrinsically worthless treasure. No diamond is worth this kind of exploitation and misery. Not ever. The author did a tremendous job in research and story-telling, going to some terrifying places to write this book. Before you buy any diamond, read this book. If you still think a diamond is romantic, I wonder about you, but the only forever thing about diamonds is the misery they produce.

Kim says

I went back and forth from liking some of this book to feeling bogged down in detail by other parts of it. Not being familiar with the geography didn't help either. The history of the diamond trade in general and in Sierra Leone in particular are interesting, and the ruthlessness of the various gov'ts/rebels is hard to even comprehend. I guess the logistics of the money transfers and amounts involved, although necessary to make his point, made the story a little dry at times. I want Simon Winchester to write about Cecil Rhodes, the founder of DeBeers!

AJ P says

Audiobook.

What was good - this book was well researched and fascinating, I would especially encourage people who aren't all that familiar with the civil war of Sierra Leone in the 90s and doesn't know how the diamonds

drove that and how the diamond industry works in general. It's got great history on diamonds, De Beers, Rhodes, and how the industry works worldwide. It also has a lot of gut wrenching information on the awful events in Sierra Leone. But it's necessary for people to know, especially those who like diamonds.

What was not good - it very much fell into the genre of book that described how pathetic and disease ridden and poor Africa is. So it was cliché. I understand that it was geared toward a certain audience, but I don't really see any need to just reinforce everyone's preconceived notions. This was especially stark in the prologue/first chapter that just talked about how awful Sierra Leone is and how sad the people are wallowing in their terrible lives. I hate when books about Africa do that.

Anyway, despite the flaws this is still a very good book about the diamond industry, and how it has, and is, driving conflict in Africa. It also gets into the funding of terrorism that would have hit readers hard back in the early 2000s.

Cathy says

I knew this would be a hard read and it is: the story of diamond smuggling in Sierra Leone. The other worldly butchery of the people, the complicity of the diamond industry, and the ties to terrorism are here. I'm always struck by the horrific acts casually perpetuated by people. People not unlike myself. Would I give in to my darker side if circumstance, opportunity, greed, lust for power or maybe just plain survival were at stake?

Otis Chandler says

I learned a lot about an area of the world I knew very little. The book was a journalistic nonfiction account of Sierra Leone, as opposed to the fictional movie (which I also enjoyed).

Key takeaways:

- Human beings can be pretty indecent to each other when the economic incentives are right, and when there are no checks on those in charge. The RUF murdered and mutilated thousands.
- There is **no** way to verify a diamond is not a conflict diamond. No matter what a diamond seller says, stones are untraceable and black market stones can be added in at any of a dozen of places on the way from the mine to the store. Only stores like DeBeers, who control their own mines and stores, can approach such a guarantee.
- The guy who started DeBeers was impressive. He bought up as many mines as he could instead of mining them, and eventually controlled the market. DeBeers has had some shady practices as the world's biggest diamond buyer and mine owner.
- DeBeers has a monopoly on diamonds, and as such can't have more than 3 executives in the US at any time or they will be arrested for prosecution by the SEC.
- DeBeers has a stockpile of diamonds in London worth billions. Selling it would flood the market.
- In late 2001, a Washington Post reporter broke a story that Osama Bin Laden had been buying conflict diamonds from Sierra Leone for the past year to convert his money to a liquid form. This was in preparation for Sept 11, as he knew the US would seize his funds after the attack. It's very likely the scheme worked, and conflict diamonds are what is funding him today.

Heather says

I hope everyone reads this, DeBeers goes out of business, and Americans adorn themselves with seashells instead of buying 80% of the diamonds....

Michel says

Possibly inspired by Ian Fleming's "Diamond Smugglers"?

One book I dreaded to read, and with good cause, as it turned out.

Not the book itself, it's pretty well written, but who wants to know the diamond you bought your wife has cost so much: slave labor, mutilations, murders, children soldiers...?

That's what we do to the 'third world': we give 'aid' to dictators, mostly military by the way, and insist on 'free' trade. The world won't be safe until we switch to 'fair' trade.

Jordan McPeck says

The horrific lengths many went to in 1990s Sierra Leone to control and mine the diamond fields is just part of the blood diamonds story. The role of everyone else down the line who bought and sold the diamonds that ended up in our jewelry is the rest of the story. And of course, the former wouldn't happen without the latter. In that way, this is a disturbing book, especially for one like myself who bought my only diamond in the mid-90s. Campbell packs on the details of both the horrors of the fields and the intricacies of the global diamond trade. At each stage of the journey a diamond takes from the fields to your local mall, each handler ignores info on its likely source in favour of the sure profit. He illustrates how, despite diamond trade assurances to the contrary, no one can be certain if they have a blood diamond on their finger. Various attempts to regulate and control the industry have failed and things aren't likely to change. Although this isn't one of the author's points, here's one of the takeaways for me: the history and practice of the diamond trade is a fine illustration of the dangers and antisocial results that come from an unfettered free market.

A somewhat uneven book that dumps a lot of info without framing it as much of a story. Parts were very dry and difficult to wade through.

Mqcarpenter says

Yes this is the book that the recent movie was based on. No I have not seen the movie. The author is a journalist, and it shows. The depth of research and detail in this book is amazing. It outlines in many layers the diamond industry, its history, and its relation to West Africa. I had no idea what to expect from the book, and was shocked to learn the horrid details and atrocities that have been occurring for decades there. Obviously, like the bumper sticker says, "if you are not appalled, you are not paying attention."

The Western world has no idea what people are suffering for this made up commodity industry. Campbell shows how elite people literally fabricate the demand for diamonds, and its price points. Everyone seems to believe that diamonds are the most precious thing you can give a loved one. Why is that? Have you ever wondered? Why is it better than any other gem or gift? The answers are very interesting, and are laid out in this book.

When you learn the origins of many diamonds, the process they go through and the conditions of the people who mine them, you may want to return it. I know I do. It made me sick. We live in quite a bubble about so many things. I am glad that someone is bringing a conscience to the public about horrible human rights situations like these. The sad thing is that it also makes you wonder why countries like our own are just ignoring it. If we can justify attacking other countries for made up reasons, why can't we take on true issues that are so well documented? It is all politics while people die.

This book is one of the best written books I have read in a long time. Campbell's writing style is intelligent, vivid, and picturesque. His depth of research and personal involvement in making this book is astonishing. I appreciate descriptions that make me feel like I am actually with the writer. Such is the case with Blood Diamonds. An excellent read if you can handle its gruesome reality and deep network of connections to follow

Melody says

The narrator was wonderful. The material he had to work with was grueling to listen to, war and atrocities. Important things to know about the diamond trade and the almost unbelievable inhumanity surrounding it. I'm glad I've always been a CZ kind of person. If I had any diamonds I wouldn't be able to keep them after this book. Really tough but certainly recommended.

Ben says

How? HOW do these things happen? And keep happening for *years*? As if the common cutting of limbs, the raping, the murders of children, is all par for the course. Par for the course all right. Play your round of golf; complain about having too much laundry to do; bitch about how soggy your fucking french fries are. These kids, kid killers, they'd get drugged-up, snorting mad-uppers -- ten, eleven, twelve year-old boys -- killing babies, murdering their own families, not even knowing *why*.

WHY?

There was a game the kids would play while razing a town. They'd get out a pregnant lady they hadn't murdered yet and take guesses as to the sex of her child. After cutting her open while still alive, they'd find out who guessed right and that was the winner.

THE WINNER.

A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier by Ishmael Beah would have been perfect to read in conjunction with this. Beah's book tells of his personal experiences as a drugged-up, village pillaging, child soldier in Sierra Leone, but does little in providing the causes and context behind his situation. In contrast,

Blood Diamonds tells us exactly why the bloodshed in Sierra Leone occurs; it spares no major historical or logistical detail behind the corruption and mass murders of innocents that took place for so many years without a blink of the eye -- with us, the United States, indirectly culpable of it as our businesses and citizens bought the diamonds that caused and *supported it*.

What kinds of atrocities are going on right now in remote parts of the world that you and I are unaware of? Could we in some way be partly responsible for what is happening? And even if not, do we have a responsibility to help put a stop to it?

A reason I read is to stun myself into a greater realization of -- a greater *feeling* for -- those that truly suffer. I don't want to walk around as the typical ignorant American -- clueless, uncaring, and *unfeeling* of the grave injustices that have taken place and are taking place *right now*.

If nothing else, let us not be ignorant. Let us read and understand and *feel*.

And fuck-dammit let's do what we can to help our fellow human beings.

FUCK.

Deyth Banger says

"August 21, 2017 –

5.0% "All Will Die"

August 21, 2017 –

5.0% "The World is going to change all boys... now is the day in which boys become men.

...

Give them guns and they are going to become killing machines.

First with Blind with

cloth

on his eyes... then it will be something more."

August 21, 2017 –

5.0% "35:33"

August 20, 2017 – Started Reading"

- Somethings define us, but what we need is speed... Speed should be a skill adopt by each human living creature. World has been changed once and for all, I have said that before now I am saying it again, which means that you should gain speed and if you normally were around 5 books... now at least Double it or Tripple it. Do you get it?

There are billions of stories such as "Blood Diamonds"... from different ASPECTs, but still nobody gets really into what's really the true mindset to take a human life. What's really a soldier?

...

Is his natural selection good?

...

It's natural it's good for you..

...

Nope, damn wrong natural selection can be good and bad... It's like humans they are good and bad...

...

Once we close our eyes we hear the voices of dead.

Erin says

i don't care how clean you tell me it is, i never want a diamond. i read a lot of depressing, intense non-fiction, and this was both if not extremely disturbing. the prologue alone made me nauseous and sad. HOWEVER, i think it's super important to read books like this, because nothing happens in a vacuum. knowing the sheer brutality exerted on people because of diamonds, a manufactured luxury, was enough to ensure i'd never ever want one in my life.

Kati says

I am never buying a diamond ever again. Ever.

Note: Contains graphic content, and language.

James says

So so book, it has some interesting stories.

Too much of the book is about the author,

how brave he was to go there,

the hardships he suffered,

,

how if everyone was as clear-sighted as him,

there wouldn't be a problem, bla bla bla.

Just when you think people couldn't be any worse than you already know

you read about how cutting off hands, and sometimes feet,

was used as a political tactic.

ugh

Where was god?

Sigmund says

The RUF and most of the diamond industry, particularly DeBeers, were guilty members in Sierra Leone's civil war. They allowed for ten years of anarchy and chaos to sweep through a country. The RUF by being the chaos themselves and DeBeers by enabling them, with money, to continue to do this. And yet, only part of the RUF was properly tried and executed for their crimes. DeBeers remains as a legal organization that supplies millions diamonds across the world. Blood Diamonds provided me with a much-needed perspective of the mutiny and devastation that swept through Sierra Leone through these years, and of the unfairness of it all.

Nicky says

A brutal and compelling read. 3.5 stars; would be more only the "update" was unfortunately a chapter tagged on the end and did not include a revision of previous chapters making it occasionally confusing (the original was written in the early 2000s and a lot has happened since then). Nonetheless, informative, well written and researched and no holds barred in terms of where responsibility for the brutality lies and the failures of the international community effectively to intervene.

Paula says

Almost good coverage of the conflicts in Sierra Leone ruined by uber liberal left wing reporter who Monday morning quarterbacks every solution to every problem with a nike-esque "AMERICA should just do it" rationalization- in the face of all of his own very compelling arguments as to why it would be almost impossible- that I am sorry his typing hands weren't severed along with the thousands of natives.

There's nothing more offensive to me than someone who shows up in a war torn infrastructure-less jungle who spends the first third of his book explaining why it was impossible for the locals, natives, a UN peacekeeping force-really any force- to solve even the most rudimentary problem in this war torn land despite more international resources spent on it that in any other conflict IN THE HISTORY OF THE UN- because- as the author illustrates- the country is all jungle trails and even the rebels cant blast through it with AK 47s- And really they are just Children who shouldn't be shot just because they are rapacious sociopathic mutilators. These kids make Dahmer look like Paula Dean.

In light of all this- the author spends the last 3rd of the book telling me it is America's obligation to fix it and that we are stupid for not doing it. DAYS AFTER 9-11- the American govt didn't do the right thing because there are some tenuous ties to al Quieda money laundering and the diamond trade in this country that ending Sierra Leone's 80 years of barbarism (that no one in the world closer to them gave a shit about)the day after 9-11 should have been the top priority of the American people. I should send MY SON into this jungle mess because some unnamed jackass "analyst" no one has ever heard of says we could have handled it in 12 days- OH yeah Mr. Campbell?

And how long after that would you have expected us to stay and invest our service people's lives, American GDP, and other resources we don't have to spare? CUZ if we don't flame it down to a parking lot- how do you expect democracy to take hold- fair elections to be run, the fighters, the mutilators the terrorists running rampant over the countryside are adolescents! We're gonna turn them into sweet students who listen to their mommies and behave accordingly? What, they're gonna turn around on day 10 to deliver newspapers to save up for three years to buy a bike instead of picking up a gun and ax to terrorize an entire village into digging up diamonds by using bayonets to carve unborn children out of their mother's bellies and boiling children over a fire if they refuse to shoot their own mother's? WTF? 12 days?

You are smarter than that. How dare you. How stupid do you think we are? I got news for you, we could blow the place to pieces and pave the bitch over in a week, we don't need 12 days. What we can not do it instill humanity into monsters in less than a fortnight. Could we provide a personal escort and a counselor for every kid in the country and a prosthetic for every one of the millions of limbs that have been amputated.. We cant do that here. We should send our service men into an unknown jungle to fix this mess half way around the world?- oh, and we're pussies because some dick days we could do it in 12 days and we don't. We could kill everyone in Sierra leone in 12 days- but if you want to turn an entire generation of genocidal diamond thieving hand-chopping off animals into humans in a country with no educational system, no infrastructure no medical care, no psychiatric services, no government and no democracy into a real country- and we're supposed to drop everything to do it because there might be some financial tie between terrorist financing and blood diamonds? Yeah, and lets nuke Switzerland while we're at it, because there is a link between their banks and terrorism too.

You want us to go in, and not kill the bad guys, because they are just kids- even though they are carrying AK47s and have name like Queen CHOP HANDS- and the American military should go in to "save these "children"? Then who is the enemy we will defeat in 12 days?

HOW DARE YO INSULT MY INTELLEGENCE OR HUMANITY with your paper thin justifications to villanize me for not handing the world the solution to another regional genocide paid for with the lives of the children we struggle to raise in this country. To lay it on my doorstep because of 9-11 is disgusting. ITS NOT MY FUCKING JOB- it is not my son's job and frankly not one American life should be shed in Campbells ridiculous attempt to coddle the children with axes bent on amputation to scare the local tribes into slavery out of a jungle full of the most heinously vicious people I've ever heard of.

So yeah. Im annoyed. He's disgusting- the whole whiny little selfish bitch story - I wish I could have helped, but there was nothing I could do, I just paid for my flight to Africa and my flat back home and only had enough cipro for myself, but America should straighten this out but those selfish American millionaires and too busy war mongering and buying their girlfriends diamonds- like we all sit around with our monocles and fainting salts while our servants prepare tea on silver platters- I got news for you Campbell- We have our own violent children, medical deficiencies and economic problems. Half my friends cant afford to vacation for 4 days on the jersey shore-Shove your international flight ticket and holier than thou attitude up your stodgy self righteous do-nothing-but-but place- blame-on-the-wrong-people-ass.

Patrick Belair says

This is a very disturbing book about a conflict far away that most people know little about, or don't care because it has no impact on them. Have clueless they are. The impact in this region will be felt for decades. Remember this the next time you go to the mall, And buy that small token of your love. Think about

how many peoples lives have been destroyed. Big business is only concerned with the bottom line. Charles Taylor ex pres of liberia guilty! of war crimes. But someone will always be in line to be next.
