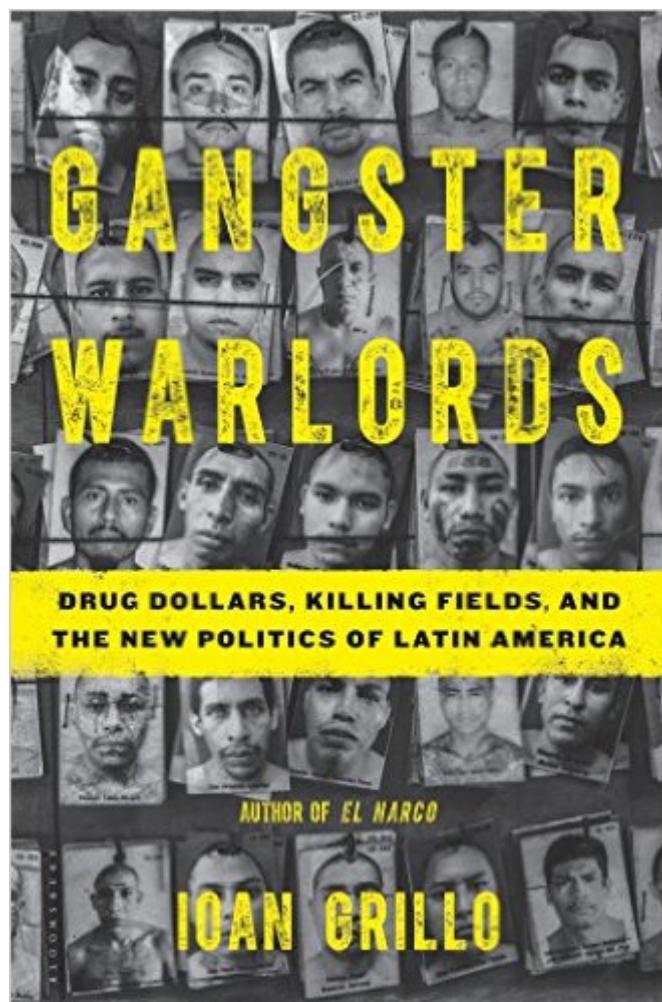


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# Gangster Warlords: Drug Dollars, Killing Fields, And The New Politics Of Latin America



## Synopsis

In a ranch south of Texas, the man known as The Executioner dumps five hundred body parts in metal barrels. In Brazil's biggest city, a mysterious prisoner orders hit-men to gun down forty-one police officers and prison guards in two days. In southern Mexico, a meth maker is venerated as a saint while enforcing Old Testament justice on his enemies. A new kind of criminal kingpin has arisen: part CEO, part terrorist, and part rock star, unleashing guerrilla attacks, strong-arming governments, and taking over much of the world's trade in narcotics, guns, and humans. What they do affects you now--from the gas in your car, to the gold in your jewelry, to the tens of thousands of Latin Americans calling for refugee status in the U.S. *Gangster Warlords* is the first definitive account of the crime wars now wracking Central and South America and the Caribbean, regions largely abandoned by the U.S. after the Cold War. Author of the critically acclaimed *El Narco*, Ioan Grillo has covered Latin America since 2001 and gained access to every level of the cartel chain of command in what he calls the new battlefields of the Americas. Moving between militia-controlled ghettos and the halls of top policy-makers, Grillo provides a disturbing new understanding of a war that has spiraled out of control--one that people across the political spectrum need to confront now.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Grillo's current book, "Gangster Warlords", is CURRENT. As a person who loves nonfiction as much as good fiction I know that when reading non-fiction knowledge is only as good as it is up-to-date. Reading a book on "current social issues" that references information from the 1970s or before can be entertaining, but not really 'useful'. Grillo is using the most current information possible, partially

because he is a part of the sources for the most current information available, and partially because he is just a good journalist who stays up-to-date. "The War On Drugs" failed, just in case you hadn't noticed. And it failed not because of medical cannabis laws, but rather the incredible amount of money created by the illegal narcotics industry. Fantastic sums of money have been used to purchase weapons and political power to ensure the continuing operation of the illegal narcotics industry, and in doing so societies have been eroded from within. Law enforcement can not be trusted in much of the world since the larger of their paychecks does not come from the government. Beyond that, when the only governmental service provided is law enforcement and the politicians respond to the heads of the illegal trade organizations rather than the populous, people lose all faith in their governments. Many nations in the Western Hemisphere suffer from the lack of trust in law enforcement and one can see it growing in the United States - although for slightly different reasons I believe. Ioan Grillo lays out fluently what has happened and is happening in four nations/national clusters as examples of the gangster warlords which threaten the global social order. These are: Brazil, Jamaica, Honduras/Guatemala/Salvador, and Mexico.

Americans who take their first trip from country to country in Latin America and the Caribbean are often astounded by the region's diversity. From Argentina, which is more heavily influenced by Italy and Spain than by any country to its north; to the polyglot island-states of the Caribbean; to Mexico and Central America, with their rich native traditions, Latin America is a study in contrasts. After all, the Western Hemisphere south of the United States encompasses 32 nation-states speaking six official languages (Spanish, Portuguese, English, French, Dutch, and Creole). So it should be no surprise when British journalist Ioan Grillo makes clear in *Gangster Warlords*, his fascinating in-depth treatment of the drug trade, that the same is true of the drug cartels that have sprouted throughout the region. Four dissimilar drug cartels Grillo tells the tale of drug trafficking in the Western Hemisphere through the lens of four criminal enterprises grounded in the drug trade: Brazil's Red Commando, Mara Salvatrucha in Honduras and El Salvador, the Shower Posse in Jamaica, and Mexico's Knights Templar. Each is a product of the culture from which it emerged, shaped by the personality of a charismatic leader. Though their business practices and the scope of their operations vary widely, they all have three things in common: they are thugs who prey upon human weakness, they mobilize armies of assassins that sometimes number in the thousands, and they commit murder indiscriminately and on an enormous scale. The super villains - who run these bloated gangs, Grillo writes, are no longer just drug traffickers, but a weird hybrid of criminal CEO, gangster rock star, and paramilitary general. They fill the popular imagination as

demonic antiheroes.

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