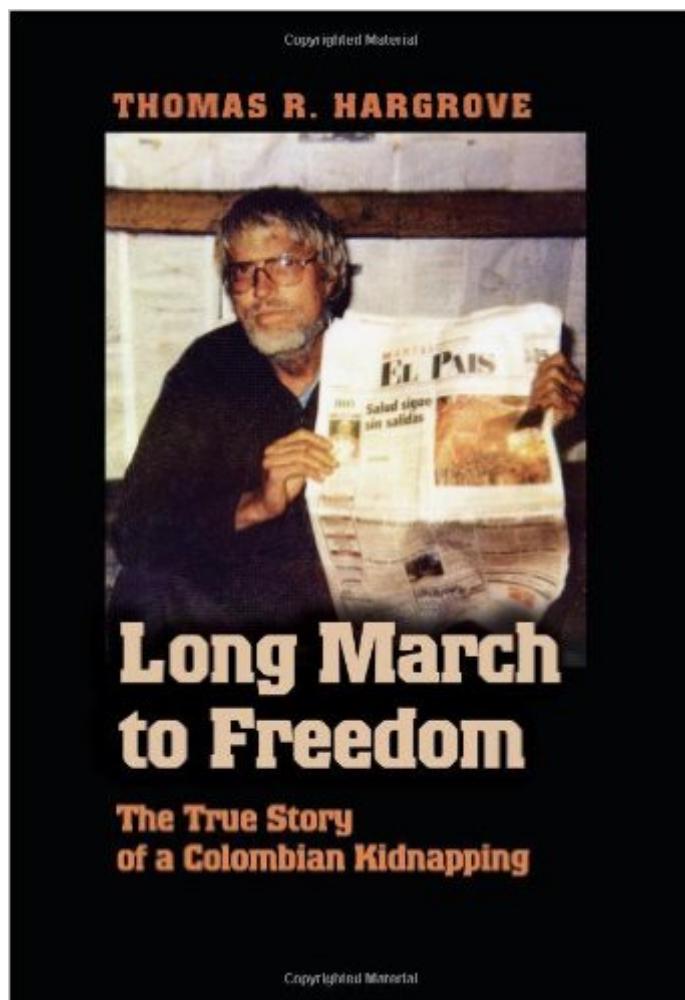


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Long March To Freedom: The True Story Of A Colombian Kidnapping



Synopsis

Running late for work one morning in September 1994, Tom Hargrove, communications director for an international agricultural aid organization in Cali, Colombia, was mildly annoyed when he spotted a roadblock, or retén, manned by soldiers in fatigues. He chafed at the delay, but told himself that guerrillas and kidnappers didn't operate on a main highway in broad daylight. But Hargrove had been dreadfully mistaken. Despite his assertions that he worked for a non-profit agricultural agency, he was forced at gunpoint into a vehicle and driven into the mountains by communist narco-terrorists who believed he was a valuable hostage. For almost a year, Hargrove was held by the guerillas and moved from one remote location to another. To maintain his grip on sanity, he recorded his daily experiences in makeshift journals: in a checkbook; on children's notebooks; and on scraps of paper scrounged during his ordeal. Hargrove's story, originally published in 1995, was the basis for the major motion picture *Proof of Life*, starring Russell Crowe and Meg Ryan. Now available again in paperback, *Long March to Freedom* chronicles one man's spirited determination to hang onto life and faith amid nearly impossible circumstances.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Enough to make you fear traveling anywhere south of Texas. The movie "Proof of Life" was based on this book, which is comprised of the secret diaries Tom Hargrove kept while being held captive in Columbia. He was taken during a traffic stop, by mistake, since the agency he worked for to help the

local population had the initials "CIA" in its acronym (CIAT, but apparently that "T" didn't resonate) and then after researching for reasons to hold him, the guerrillas discovered, like many others his age, he had served in Vietnam. He was held by undisciplined teenagers with automatic rifles, nearly starved to death, no exercise, no warmth, at times chained to his bed - imprisoned with no political beliefs to keep him going. A miracle he survived at all. I've read many stories of those imprisoned, but this one was just wrenching. Being at the mercy of teenagers with no idea of the importance of keeping you fed - and knowing that the faceless company you work for has a "policy of not negotiating with terrorists" (sounds great, but you're barely alive) - absolutely harrowing.

Long March to Freedom is good to read especially if one has seen the film. The book is complete different and gives better inside to the life of the Kidnapped person, although little bit too diary like (some days skipped).

As a family member (hillbilly) I have first hand knowledge of Dr Hargorves kidnapping in Colombia. This book is just like it should be - a writing of first hand experience by a trained journalist who happened to be kidnapped and held for eleven months by Colombias narco-guerillas. Second to worrying about his family, he worried about finding scraps of paper and discarded pens/pencils, in order to record what was going on around him and inside him. Since his release he has dedicated his time and energy to assisting other captives and their families. This is a farm boy from Texas who spend his life trying to improve the ability to feed the world.

Eye-opening account of nearly year-long captivity and the ensuing emotions...the initial fear and anger at being taken, frustration at the captors' ignorance and stupidity, concern for loved ones back home, acceptance of the situation and figuring out how to stay alive for an indeterminate amount of time in the face of starvation and solitude, sudden realization that death may be imminent, desperation, depression, hopelessness, and finally, the release...unceremoniously dumped on a road with instructions to follow the road and keep going. A first-hand account written from daily notes recorded as it happened. Fact. Not fiction. The author has spent his life helping people in developing countries to permanently increase their food production. Who could imagine this would be the thanks he received?

His overall story of captivity is good but the style of this books makes it hard to read and boring. It's written diary style and most entries are boring and repetitive. I understand many of his days in

captivity were uneventful but to read every uneventful day does not make for a book that holds your attention.

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