

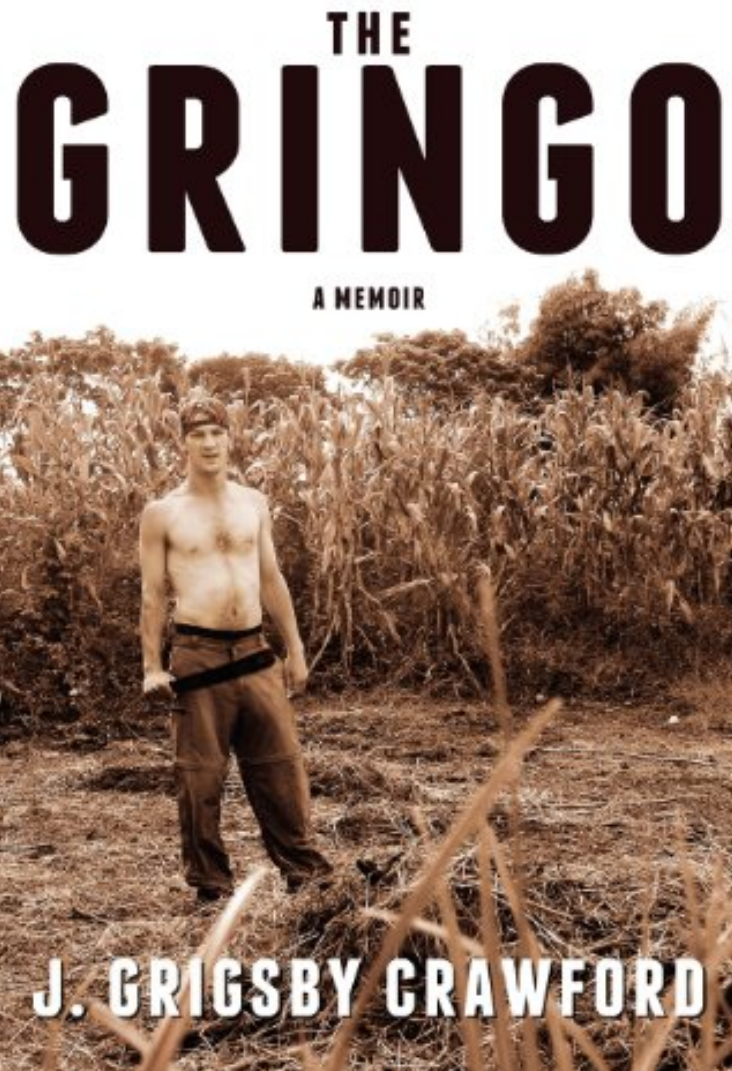
[Ebook pdf] The Gringo: A Memoir

The Gringo: A Memoir

J. Grigsby Crawford

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"Crawford is an outstanding new writer. This is a must-read."—Chevy Chase



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#2313224 in Books Crawford J Grigsby 2012-12-11Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 8.50 x .55 x 5.511, .68 #File Name: 0988482274240 pagesThe Gringo A Memoir | File size: 34.Mb

J. Grigsby Crawford : The Gringo: A Memoir before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gringo: A Memoir:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Travels to foreign country--hates itBy MidMoBoIt was an interesting story. I read it straight through, but that is probably because I am also a returned Peace Corps Volunteer myself and could identify with some of the experiences the author went through. But by the end of the book, his

negativity and unrelenting cynicism had me wondering why he stayed in Ecuador beyond the first few weeks. In a way he reminds me a little of Paul Theroux, who traveled to many foreign countries and--based on what he wrote--seems to have disliked all of them. Theroux is a good enough writer that his books are readable anyway. Unfortunately, Crawford is no Theroux. There is another book written by a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador that offers a much richer, more balanced, and more nuanced view of Ecuador and what it was like to be a Volunteer there: "Living Poor" by Moritz Thomsen. It is also much better written. I can highly recommend Thomsen's book to anyone who has even a flicker of interest in Ecuador or the Peace Corps. I couldn't honestly recommend this book to anyone. 38 of 41 people found the following review helpful. "Searing nut pain..." By Sarah I don't like memoirs, but I would recommend this book without reservation to anyone who needs company sitting in the backseat on a long road trip or on a long flight home. Crawford is an excellent storyteller, using compelling prose while still remaining colloquial. I'm always interested in narratives that change the way I think about human nature, foreign aid, and the morality of "empowering" a "developing country" - especially since I work for an NGO myself. The mescaline trip sequence was reminiscent of both Kerouac and early Burroughs, while his detailed descriptions of his experiences with chronic, "searing nut pain" were just thoroughly entertaining (because I'm an awful person). However, Crawford's account of the stark loneliness and isolation for a "gringo" in rural Ecuador is what impresses most - it's not the whining of a privileged white college graduate forced into a life without indoor plumbing, but instead a true reflection on how humanity interacts with one another, and just how our supposedly "globally connected" world is still so harshly divided. Since I'm a literary snob, there are a few places where the language could have been tightened, and some sections seemed a bit repetitive. However, this memoir manages to both stand out in a glutted market of tell-all and creative non-fiction, a true and truly compelling read. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Refreshing By Michelle The messages contained in *The Gringo* resonated with me for a number of reasons. Like the author, I too come from a rich country (Australia) and hold deep sympathy for the less fortunate of our world. Coming from a society with some form of social security and a decent level of charity for the poor, I was absolutely horrified when I witnessed the widespread and desperate poverty while travelling in India for the first time. Also coming from a spiritual background that says we should help those in need, I helped some poor people that I had met in India by paying their debts - a modest sum for me but a financial albatross for them. I also helped some people in a similar way when I visited Bolivia. While I somewhat naively thought that my generosity would be appreciated, I was unprepared for what I got in return instead. I can only assume that the consequential treatment of contempt towards me was due to these financially challenged people resenting the fact that I had something that they didn't. So I can sympathize with the author when, even though he's only trying to help, he faces an even worse situation of ill treatment than I did in the form of an attempted abduction followed by persistent harassment. It's no wonder he asks himself "What am I doing in Ecuador." As the author makes crystal clear, rich countries have been throwing aid at poor countries in one way or another for decades with little to show for it. Despite the good intentions of many people, the level and spread of poverty has only got worse. Obviously something is wrong. After reading *The Gringo*, apparently what's wrong is that no one has a clue of what they're doing - either the rich or the poor. Some critics of *The Gringo* suggest that instead of complaining about the current situation, the author should be making suggestions on how to improve it. But what new suggestions? Everything's been done before. There are no new ideas. Maybe if big corporations acquire the desire to eliminate poverty with as much drive as they have of increasing their profits - then things will change. Like that's going to happen. Both the rich and the poor need a change of consciousness - not more handouts. It's books like *The Gringo* that will spread the awareness for the need of this change. This is a poignant tale where the author bares all. He shares his thoughts, opinions, experiences and deep felt emotions and takes the reader on a somewhat harrowing roller coaster ride. It's not all doom and gloom though - there are many humorous moments. The description of his counterpart in Ecuador is hilarious. The quality of the writing is excellent. The author draws you in and doesn't let you go until you hear everything he has to say. Some of his messages some people won't like hearing - but *The Gringo* is a refreshing and intelligent account of how rich countries have been throwing money at poor countries for decades and getting nowhere.

Within weeks of arriving as a volunteer in a remote corner of South America, Crawford got a lot more than he bargained for: a narrow escape from a kidnapping plot hatched by the people he was sent there to help. Then things only got stranger. In his quest to find adventure, Crawford undertook a savage journey of danger, drugs, sex, and alarming illness. What resulted is *The Gringo*: one part literary tale of two lonely years in the Amazon jungle and one part gonzo-journalism account of life in the Peace Corps, an agency wandering aimlessly through the twenty-first century. Filled with sharp humor and eye-opening observations about the human condition, this is an unforgettable story that grabs the reader and doesn't let go.

"[*The Gringo*] always entertaining and at times moving. ... The point of the book, beyond Crawford's journey to understanding and acceptance, is that the real world is difficult, it must be endured, and that achievement comes with cost. These are valuable lessons. ... [I]t's his rugged honesty, the willingness to say things that perhaps he shouldn't,

that makes this book complete, and something more than a young man's travelogue in uncomfortable surroundings. It makes it real, and worth reading."--Men's Journal