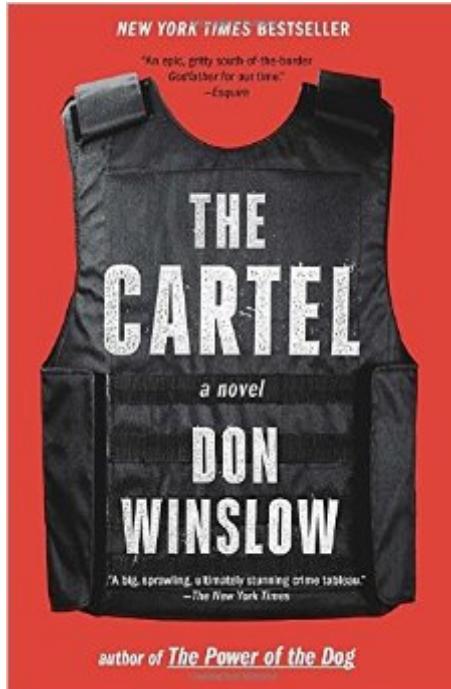


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The Cartel (Vintage Crime: Black Lizard)



Synopsis

A NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLERWINNER OF THE LOS ANGELES TIMES BOOK PRIZEÂ ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEARA New York Times Criticsâ™ Pick * The Seattle Times * The Denver Post * The Washington PostÂ *Â Publishers Weekly * * National Post (Toronto) * The Guardian * New Statesman * The TelegraphÂ * The Sunday Times (London) * The Daily MailÂ * The Mail on SundayItâ™s 2004. AdÃn Barrera, kingpin of El FederaciÃn, is languishing in a California federal prison. Ex-DEA agent Art Keller passes his days in a monastery, having lost everything to his thirty-year blood feud with the drug lord. Then Barrera escapes. Now, thereâ™s a two-million-dollar bounty on Kellerâ™s head and no one else capable of taking Barrera down. As the carnage of the drug war reaches surreal new heights, the two men are locked in a savage struggle that will stretch from the mountains of Sinaloa to the shores of Veracruz, to the halls of power in Washington, ensnaring countless others in its wake.Â Internationally bestselling author Don Winslow'sÂ The Cartel is the searing, unfiltered epic of the drug war in the twenty-first century.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

[Buy this book at IndieBound] [Buy this book at] [Buy this for Kindle] [Buy this book at Barnes and Noble]Full disclosure: Iâ™ve become obsessed recently with the border noir subgenre of crime fiction; this, as I grow ever older (thatâ™s not a complaint) and harder to please (thatâ™s not a

complaint, either). I wasn't very worried about liking Don Winslow's drug-and-blood-soaked opus THE CARTEL, which is not so much a sequel to THE POWER OF THE DOG as a continuation of it. Given that it was published a decade ago, I felt duty-bound to circle back and read that awesome novel before digging into the follow-up. I'm glad I did, if only to report that the brilliant, violent magic of the previous book is continued, enhanced and increased in this one, almost as if it is one giant novel divided into two parts. One problem with getting on in years: It becomes harder to keep track of characters or storylines within a novel. Thus it was a surprise for me that THE CARTEL, with its sprawling plotlines that radiate from and circle around and come back on themselves, and its hundred or so characters who are constantly double-crossing each other never once got me lost. I didn't suddenly recover brain cells that I lost in the 1970s, either; this state of affairs is due entirely to Winslow, an amazing, almost deific literary talent who should be a household name and eclipses, well, just about everybody. Along with its predecessor, THE CARTEL is the magnum opus of crime fiction. It concerns, as one might guess, a cartel --- specifically, a Mexican drug cartel.

Wow! This sprawling novel narrates the bloody advance of the narcotics trade in Mexico and the decline of any alternative government or policing as the narcotraficantes bribe or terrify the elected and appointed officials between 2004-2014. In 2010 alone, 15,273 people die in drug-related deaths in Mexico. In Juarez alone, 7,000 die, 10,000 businesses fail, 130,000 people lose their jobs and 250,000 people leave the province, fearing for their lives and those of their families. This is a fierce novel on a grand scale. In the process of fighting the narco traffickers, the few good guys quickly lose their cherry: no one is innocent by the end of the story. The protagonist is Art Keller, Mexican father, American mother, DEA super star but in disgrace because he's ruffled too many feathers in the agency with his cowboy tactics (which work!). His biggest coup? The arrest and conviction of Adan Barrera, patron of El Federacion, the union of drug cartels that rules Mexico. In the process, Keller was responsible for the death of Barrera's two brothers (also both lowlifes). The US government extradites Barrera to a Mexican prison and Keller's life is at risk again: Barrera has placed a two million dollar bounty on his head. Barrera escapes prison and Keller is drawn back into DEA business. From then on, it's non-stop action and non-stop killing. "Insane" Barrera struggles to regain control over a terminally fractured landscape of cartels, dealers and private armies. A lot of good guys die in this novel. Even more innocents "even passersby" die too. The death rate among the drug traffickers and their troops (many of whom are state or federal policemen) and among the uncorrupted cops who are trying to bring them down is prodigious.

The story of the Italian Mafia and its beginnings was well told by Mario Puzo in the 1969 book, 'The Godfather', and then the Godfather films became some of the best films of the era. We learned the term Cosa Nostra, and the Mafia became a real entity. After reading this book, 'The Cartel', I can see the story of the Mexican Cartels in the same light. This book tells the story of the El Federacion, the most powerful Cartel gives us the individual families and personalities, the Mexican and the U.S. Government involvement in the war on drugs, and two main characters on opposite sides of the fence. It is a stunning storyline and kept my interest for all 623 pages. Yes, it is a big book, packed with fascinating characters, and this book has all the makings of a huge hit. We move from 2004 to the 1980's to 2014 in the telling of the lives of two men and their connecting families. Art Keller, a DEA agent has been fighting this drug war for thirty years. He is after the head of the most powerful cartel, Adan Barrera, the man who killed his partner and has brought more bloodshed to hundreds of families. Adan is a ruthless man, leading a large Cartel, making millions of dollars. A man so powerful he cannot trust many men who work for him. He is a wanted man with a two million dollar bounty on his head. Art Keller is a man on a mission, he wants Adan Barrera's head on a platter. His job for thirty years was to put this man behind bars, and he succeeded. Barrera was set up by his wife and sent to prison. Prison for Barrera is nothing like any other prison, it is more like a country club. And, Adan, the powerful man he is, has made plans to escape. Money talks as we all know.

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