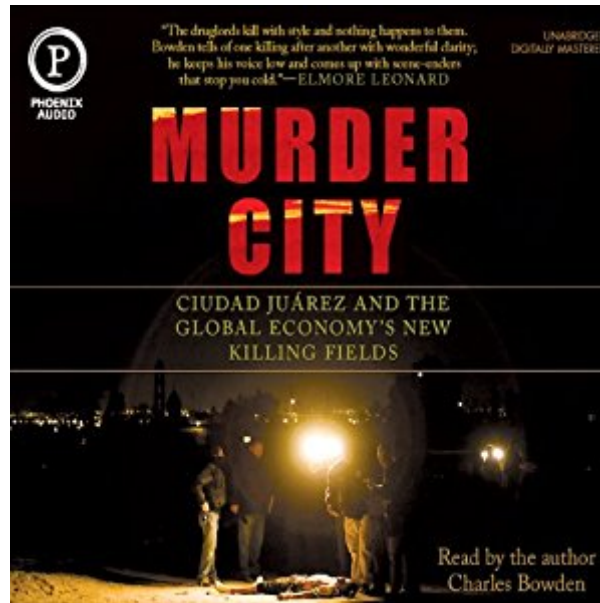


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# Murder City: Ciudad Juárez And The Global Economy's New Killing Fields



## Synopsis

Ciudad Juárez lies just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas. A once-thriving border town, it now resembles a failed state. Infamously known as the place where women disappear, its murder rate exceeds that of Baghdad. Last year 1,607 people were killed—a number that is on pace to increase in 2009. In *Murder City*, Charles Bowden—one of the few journalists who has spent extended periods of time in Juárez—has written an extraordinary account of what happens when a city disintegrates. Interweaving stories of its inhabitants—a raped beauty queen, a repentant hitman, a journalist fleeing for his life—with a broader meditation on the town's descent into anarchy, Bowden reveals how Juárez's culture of violence will not only worsen, but inevitably spread north. Heartbreaking, disturbing, and unforgettable, *Murder City* establishes Bowden as one of our leading writers working at the height of his powers. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

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True Crime

## Customer Reviews

If the angels ever visited Juarez looking for the proverbial one good man, I'm afraid they'd either be kidnapped, murdered, or probably both before their search was over. In his dark, non-fiction novel, *Murder City: Ciudad Juarez and the Global Economy's New Killing Fields*, Charles Bowden takes you by the hand and gives a guided tour of one of the lower hells that's just across the border from El Paso, Texas. On your journey through this third-world dystopia, you travel to an impoverished insane asylum out in the desert ran by El Pastor, who collects from the streets of Juarez those

whose lives were shattered by torture, drugs, gang rape, and a host of other horrors. From there you'll visit the "death houses" where underneath floors and patios the anonymous dead wait to be found. You'll cruise the streets at dawn to find the bodies bound with silver and gray duct tape at hands, feet, and mouth, deposited the night before. You'll also meet a sicario, an assassin, who speaks of his childhood, his time in the Mexican state police and the FBI academy, and finally his plunge into "the life" where he has since racked up over 250 murders becoming a highly sought after "murder artist". At each point on your journey, Bowden stops and makes you look, he makes you bear witness as he has done for almost 20 years, to the unacknowledged, unreported disintegration of not only a city, but of an entire country. From the nearly ubiquitous corruption in all branches of the Mexican government, military, and police forces to the members of drug cartels living like kings surrounded by grinding poverty to American factories paying starvation wages, Bowden drags it all into the light for us to see.

This is a twisted mess of a book, convoluted and poetic, some wild mix of Jack Kerouac and Raymond Chandler and Truman Capote and something much pulpier. The writing is fantastic, with chilling metaphors that fit perfectly the madness in Juarez. There are no simple answers for the situation there. A perfect storm of systemic corruption, trade politics, globalization, illegal drugs, poverty and gang violence have created a city where drug smuggling, murder and illegal human trafficking is less about a morality and more about opportunity. The only opportunity. Even the low-wage factories, the maquiladoras, where many in Juarez have traditionally made their un-livable living, are closing down as companies take their business overseas to even cheaper labor markets like China. As a result, there is no hope in Juarez, a city that is more dangerous than Iraq. In this city that is visible from El Paso, Texas, it is not uncommon for a dozen people to be killed in a day. For bodies to be found half-buried in the desert, arms and mouths bound with duct tape, doused in gasoline and burned. For bodies to be found wrapped in plastic, decapitated. For young women and girls to disappear and be found weeks later, raped, murdered. For the corrupt police to show up and block off a street for the corrupt army, who arrives, rounds up a group of people, systematically executes them and then leaves. For reporters who take the wrong photos or ask the wrong questions to be disappeared. For children to be caught in the crossfire as their parents are gunned down. To find bodies with hundreds of rounds in them. To find bodies of people who were tortured for days. To find "death houses," where under the floorboards lie dozens rotting bodies of anonymous Mexicans. And all the while, in the U.S.

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