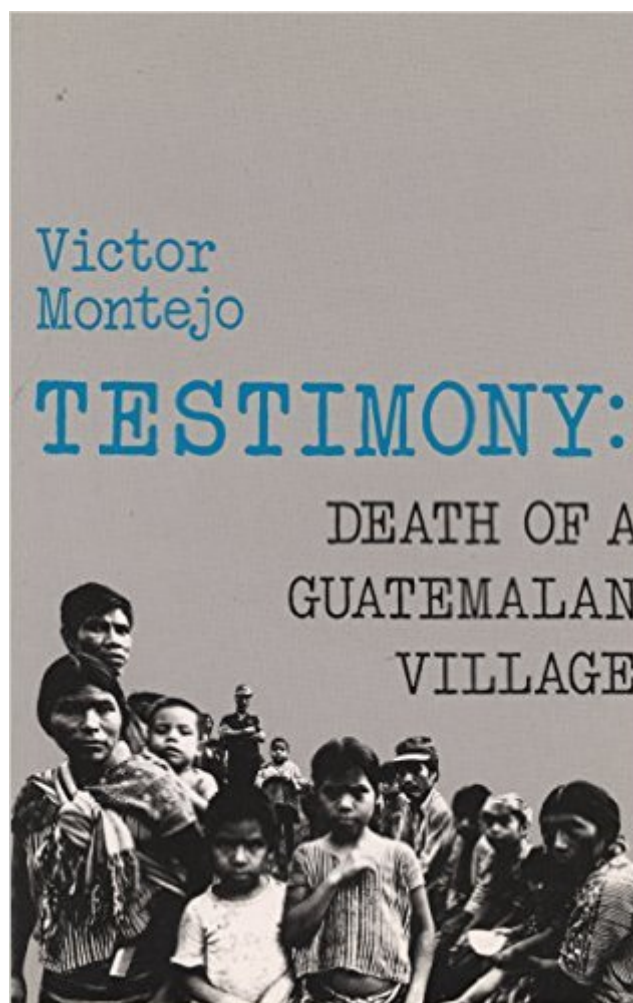


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Testimony: Death Of A Guatemalan Village



Synopsis

TESTIMONY: DEATH OF A GUATEMALAN VILLAGE is an eyewitness account by a Guatemalan primary school teacher detailing one instance of violent conflict between the indigenous Maya people and the army. An accidental clash between the village's "civil patrol" and a Guatemalan army troop leads to the execution or imprisonment of many villagers. Written in clear, direct prose, this account reads like an adventure story while conveying an historical reality.

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Customer Reviews

A poignant message to those who will see. Using his own words (translated from his Mayan dialect), Victor Montejo paints a picture of endurance, pain, and hopelessness for the Mayans of his homeland--Guatemala. His ability to endure and survive the abuses of the Kaibiles (Mayan soldiers hell bent on destruction and murder) allows a ray of hope to pierce the seeming hopelessness. Separated from his family, friends, and students, Victor maintains a Christian ethic--he does not believe in murder. In fact, he faces his oppressors with dignity and responds with kindness even when it seems all is lost. To discover the outcome of Victor's painful trials--you must read this suspense-filled, non-fiction book.

Although it is a fast, exciting read, Montejo's Testimony is an extremely powerful, raw book. It realistically depicts the genocide occurring in Guatemala between 1980-82. He is brutally graphic, but touches one in such a manner that one is compelled to pursue the subject. This personal, heart-wrenching story is a moving experience for anyone, especially those interested in Guatemala

and Central America.

TESTIMONY: DEATH OF A GUATEMALAN VILLAGE is an eyewitness account by a Guatemalan primary school teacher detailing one instance of violent conflict between the indigenous Maya people and the army. An accidental clash between the village's "civil patrol" and a Guatemalan army troop leads to the execution or imprisonment of many villagers. Written in clear, direct prose, this account reads like an adventure story while conveying an historical reality. "Victor Montejo writes vividly, with a translator of distinction, about another Latin American reality." --The Guardian "Montejo has first-hand involvement with the violence that Didion both mystifies and, in a morbid way, romanticizes. He conveys a rare sense of the lived reality in Central America, in a clear storytelling voice that makes it chillingly human." --San Francisco Sun

A great first hand perspective of life during the Guatemalan Civil War. Victor manages to not vilify or dehumanize the soldiers that carried out the killings and sheds light on the long term impact of conflict on social relations.

I came across this work doing research for a graduate paper at university and was thoroughly blown away by it. It's short, concise, and utterly devastating. This pamphlet reveals all the dark sides of man's reptilian nature, and records a terrifying experience of survival. For ten years, Victor Montejo was a schoolteacher in the rural Mayan village of Tzalala in north-western Guatemala. In July 1982, the government announced the formation of "civil defense groups", ostensibly to ward off rebel "guerrillas". The inhabitants of Tzalala resisted this coercion as best they could; until one day their village militia accidentally fires upon an army patrol, unleashing a deadly cycle of events... In just over a hundred pages, this book takes its reader through almost every stage of the de-humanization process: fear, panic, terror, interrogations, torture, humiliation, executions, the list seems endless. Yet the simplicity with which these are all conveyed is mesmerizing. You realize that once confronted by agents of the killing machine, your every word could mean the difference between life and death. Montejo relates facts as they occurred, without any editorial comment. He refrains from judging anyone and allows his readers to formulate their own opinions. Throughout his entire ordeal, he never once loses hope. His courage and dignity in the face of barbarism arouse great admiration. This is one of the best first-hand accounts I have read about violence in Central America during the 1980s. Strangely enough, it does not seem to be well-known outside the academic field. All the more reason to acquire a copy of this extraordinary book.

I am an honours student writing a thesis on the use and usefulness of testimonies in understanding the Guatemalan genocide of the late 70s and early 80s. The main part of my piece will attempt to justify why Menchu's controversial piece is important. But I thought as though to further my contention I would need to read further, particularly Montejo's 'Death of a Guatemalan Village'. I found it most useful and unlike Menchu's piece, this has drawn a lot less attention and is considered amongst the scholarly community with a lot less contempt. Montejo's book is so clear that it feels as though we are watching a TV doco on him. Top book and necessary for studies of Guatemalan genocide

I had to read this memoir for a Native American Studies course I'm currently taking, taught by none other than Victor Montejo himself. Although this book was one of the assigned texts, I had no idea what horrendous and trying events Professor Montejo had been through; he is such a sweet, happy man in class, no one could ever guess. The events portrayed in the memoir are incredible & very clearly paint exactly what Montejo experienced. The sadness of the people, the brutality of the soldiers, and the overall unbelievable account of true events is astonishing.

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