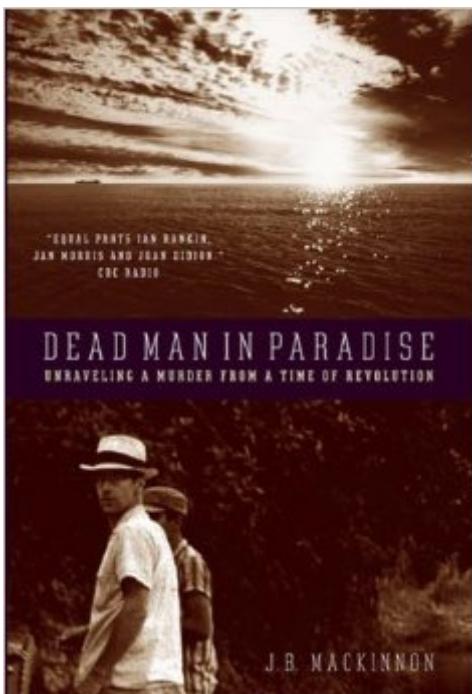


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Dead Man In Paradise: Unraveling A Murder From A Time Of Revolution



Synopsis

At nightfall on June 22, 1965, amid the turmoil of the Dominican revolution and U.S. military occupation, a soldier emerged from the outskirts of a small town to report that he had just shot and killed two policemen and an outspoken Catholic priest. It's the opening scene in a mystery that, forty years later, compels writer J.B. MacKinnon "the priest's nephew, born five years after the incident" to visit the island nation for himself. Beginning with scant official information, he embarks on a chilling investigation of what many believe was a carefully plotted assassination "and on a search for the uncle he never knew. Winner of Canada's highest award for literary nonfiction, *Dead Man in Paradise* takes MacKinnon to corners of the country far from the Caribbean paradise seen by millions of tourists; he meets with former revolutionaries and shadowy generals from the era of dictatorship, family members of the slain policemen, and struggling Dominicans for whom the dead priest is a martyr, perhaps even a saint. Along the way, he uncovers a story inseparable from the brutal history of the New World, from the fallout of American invasion, and from the pure longing for social justice that once touched a generation. Part memoir, part travelogue, part mystery thriller, *Dead Man in Paradise* is a testament to the enduring virtues of literary journalism • (The Georgia Straight).

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Customer Reviews

In 1965, before the author was born, his uncle was murdered in the Dominican Republic. His uncle was Father James Arthur MacKinnon, born and raised on Cape Breton Island in Canada, and he

was a priest of the Scarboro Order. In four-plus years in the DR, Padre Arturo proved himself an indefatigable worker and champion of the rights and interests of the poor and downtrodden. He was murdered in the midst of a revolution, in response to which the United States, two months earlier, had (once again) invaded the country. His bullet-ridden body was found with two other corpses, one an army lieutenant and the other a policeman in civilian clothes. Precisely what happened, and who was responsible, was a mystery, even after an investigation conducted by the Organization of American States. Forty years later, author J.B. MacKinnon spent months in the DR, trying to resolve the mystery of what happened to his uncle and who was responsible. At one point, he is told: "What you are doing is using history as a weapon, no? You are telling the story of our country, and you need to be careful. There are places where you would ask these kinds of questions and you would disappear." MacKinnon obviously lived to write his book, but he encountered countless runarounds and stonewalls and even a little intimidation, and some (including many Dominicans) probably quarrel with the tentative conclusions he reaches. To my mind, there are three reasons for reading **DEAD MAN IN PARADISE**. First is for the picture it gives of Padre Arturo and other members of the Scarboro Order - they are admirable humans whose principal mission was helping people in this world as opposed to preparing them for the next. Second is the portrayal of the DR, both its history and much about life and conditions there today.

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