



Maracaibo Reviewed By Steve Moore Of Bookpleasures.com

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Steve Moore

Reviewer Steve Moore: Steve is a practicing physicist. Besides his many publications in physics, he has authored two techno-thrillers and many short stories in the techno-thriller and sci-fi genres. His interests include physics, genetics, robotics and scientific ethics. He is on Facebook and has a [WEBSITE](#) with an active blog about these areas and others of current interest.

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Author: Jim Ciullo
Publisher: Mainly Murder Press
ISBN: 0-615-29012-4
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Action and Intrigue in South America

Publishing today is a buyer's market. There are so many good books out there that the average reader can use the internet to have access to a large number of good books to read. He can read e-books at his computer or with e-readers. Or he can still trot off to his nearest brick and mortar bookstore to get his cup of java and browse.

Hollywood should not ignore this abundance of good books. There are books full of suspense and international intrigue that are just waiting to be made into a movie. Hidden away with some indie publisher may be the next blockbuster. A POD or e-book may become the next big success at Sundance.

There are new authors out there that have gathered a lifetime of experiences – bizarre, strange, exciting, international experiences – and used them as a backdrop to their fiction. What they are writing is refreshingly new and original. These are the books your big publishing houses will not take a chance on, but they are books that you, the reader, can savor.

Maracaibo by James A. Ciullo is such a book. The publisher is Mainly Murder Press, a small New England indie press. I could easily imagine this book becoming a movie. But I also found it an entertaining novel of suspense and international intrigue.

The main character is Marialena Morales, a CIA agent stationed in Venezuela, a country run by a leftist strongman. Two Senators are invited for a visit. One is kidnapped and one is killed and the Venezuelan President is blamed by a saber-rattling U.S. V.P. (Sound familiar? Names are changed to protect the guilty.) Marialena knows the surviving Senator and sets out to save him. The story continues to move forward like a mad sprint with some bizarre characters and twists along the way.

In some ways the plot is standard search and rescue. Yet Mr. Ciullo gives a different spin by using his experiences to set the scenes. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Venezuela and knows the country, customs and language. He writes with a journalistic style akin to Frederic Forsyth's and with similar attention to detail.

The book could have been called Guajira. Most of the action takes place in this rough and desolate desert land in Colombia on the Venezuelan border. Here we find the ELN (Army of National Liberation), the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia), and right-wing death squads competing with bandits, kidnappers, drug dealers, and the Colombian military, aided by U.S. equipment and advisers. It's a lethal mix. (I left one out on purpose. You'll have to read the book to find out which one.)

While entertaining, this book is not funny. The geopolitical situation in our world today is not a laughing matter. This book captures the grand panorama of South America, a part of the world we in the U.S. to our detriment tend to neglect with our preoccupation with the Middle East. I never had a dull moment reading this novel. This is the kind of book I like to read. You will too. Enjoy.