



Throwing Stones at the Moon: Narratives From Colombians Displaced by Violence (Voice of Witness)

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For nearly five decades, Colombia has been embroiled in internal armed conflict among guerrilla groups, paramilitary militias, and the country's own military. Civilians in Colombia have to make their lives despite the threat of torture, kidnapping, and large-scale massacres—and more than four million have had to flee their homes. The oral histories in *Throwing Stones at the Moon* describe the most widespread of Colombia's human rights crises: forced displacement. Speakers recount life before displacement, the reasons for their flight, and their struggle to rebuild their lives. Among the narrators:

JULIA, a hospital union leader whose fight against corruption led to a brutal attempt on her life. In 2009, assassins tracked her to her home and stabbed her seven times in the face and chest. Since the attack, Julia has undergone eight facial reconstructive surgeries, and continues to live in hiding.

DANNY, who at eighteen joined a right-wing paramilitary's enormous training camp in the Eastern Plains of Colombia. Initially lured by the promise of quick money, Danny soon realized his mistake and escaped to Ecuador. He describes his harrowing escape and his struggle to survive as a refugee with two young children to support.

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Editorial Review

Review

"Here are the real and unforgettable voices of Colombia's long nightmare. They tell us of normal lives shattered by trauma, suffering, violence, and redeemed by love, resilience, courage or hard-earned wisdom. I read these oral tales with a knot in my stomach, frightened and moved, and finally amazed by this lesson: when people find the strength to tell us what has happened to them, no matter how horrendous, a terrible yet universal beauty somehow emerges, always casting light on the mystery of being human."

—Francisco Goldman, author of *Say Her Name*

"Outside the U.S. media's lights and whir, the largest crisis in the world of forced displacement from home is taking place in Colombia. *Throwing Stones at the Moon* makes it personal through these narratives of loved and difficult life, vivid and specific to Colombia's places and to the families torn and struggling amid the long war. Brodzinsky and Schoening convey these people's tender and bitter stories, of resilience and loss, of cruelty and solidarity, in their own full voices. Stories that don't end with an act of violence, but that call out for compassion, and for justice."

—John Lindsay-Poland, Director for Latin America and the Caribbean of the Fellowship for Reconciliation

"Poignant."—*Kirkus*

"Human rights journalists Brodzinsky and Schoening geographically organize intimate oral histories from individuals living through pervasive violence among Colombia's drug cartels, military forces, and rebels. Often astonishing quotes double as headings...piquing readers' curiosity and conscience...Readers concerned with human rights and Latin American politics will find this account of violence and survival both sad and inspiring."—*Publishers Weekly*

Praise for the Voice of Witness series:

"These books are amazing ... beautifully produced, with incredible editing and literary sensibility. Voice of Witness has done a better job than I've seen anybody do with having people tell their stories in a way that really engages you."

—Rachel Maddow

"The series does not so much weave a tapestry from different experiences as braid a rope, a lifeline by which we might haul ourselves into a less ignorant, more actively compassionate future. In them, the specific illuminates the general, destroying preconceptions, stereotypes, and cop-out responses along the way."

—Richard Vernon, *Sojourners Magazine*

"In a time when history is told in cheap television re-enactments, if at all, and personal tragedy is gobbled up in rapidly digestible magazine photos and reality shows, this project goes against the grain."

—*Guardian UK*

"The soon-to-be-released book, *Throwing Stones At The Moon* (Voice of Witness, 2012) reads like a collection of literary short stories, but, in this case, the stories are both real and horrifying. The stories of

those gathered in Moon are told by the Colombian victims of human rights abuses themselves...Given that these voices are rarely heard, this book is invaluable.”

—*Huffington Post*

About the Author

Sibylla Brodzinsky has spent more than twenty years writing about Latin American politics, human rights, and social issues. She is a freelance journalist in Colombia, contributing regularly to *The Economist*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, and *The Guardian*.

Max Schoening is a researcher and writer on human rights in Colombia. He contributed research to *Violentology: A Manual of the Colombian Conflict*, a forthcoming photography book documenting the history of the Colombian conflict by Stephen Ferry.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Joan Burton:

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Dominick Tran:

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Tabitha Devore:

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