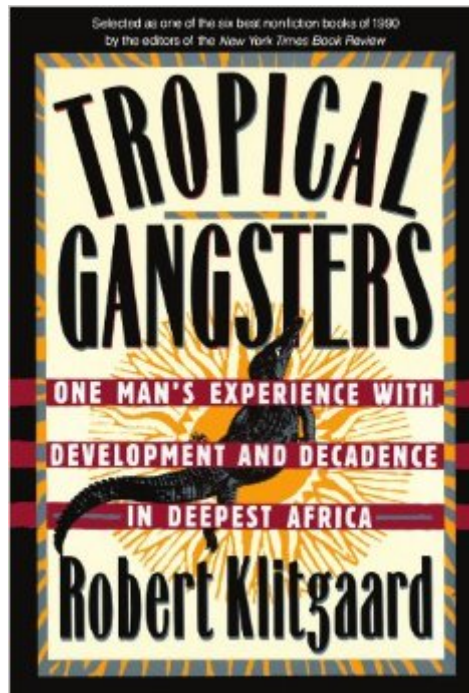


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Tropical Gangsters: One Man's Experience With Development And Decadence In Deepest Africa



Synopsis

Selected as one of the six best nonfiction books of 1990 by the editors of the New York Times Book Review, this is a compelling and entertaining account of the author's two-and-a-half year adventure in Equatorial Guinea, and his efforts to get this small bankrupt African nation on the path of structural development.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

It is not very common to find a World Bank economist who writes with a touch of humor, humility and eloquence, but that is exactly what you will discover in this unique book. The author was a World Bank advisor assigned to the tiny African nation of Equatorial Guinea in the late 1980's, a time when many African nations were beginning to flirt with market reforms and economic liberalization. This book is kind of like a personal diary of the time he spent there. It is written in an easygoing, informal style. He alternates between discussing his job- trying to develop an economic strategy that will enable E. Guinea to qualify for a World Bank loan- and discussing his recreational activities, which range from surfboarding to hanging out with African rock stars. He introduces us to many people- government officials, "experts" from the UN and other international organizations, and ordinary Equatoguineans. He seems to be particularly critical of the so-called "experts," many of whom are in this remote backwater merely because "they couldn't find jobs in their own countries." Many economists and other academics seeking a rigorous, theoretical analysis of African political economy might be frustrated by this informal style, but I think it adds an extra dimension to the story of economic reform in the third world. It helps remind us that these structural adjustment policies

thought up in Washington D.C. are implemented by real people facing real constraints in recipient countries. Klitgaard does an excellent job of relating the pressures faced by well-intentioned (and some not so well-intentioned) government ministers, as they must deal with corruption, apathetic bureaucrats, nasty military officers, and the poor infrastructure found in every developing country.

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