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# **The Burning Season: The Murder Of Chico Mendes And The Fight For The Rain Forest**



## Synopsis

"In the rain forests of the western , " writes author Andrew Revkin, "the threat of violent death hangs in the air like mist after a tropical rain. It is simply a part of the ecosystem, just like the scorpions and snakes cached in the leafy canopy that floats over the forest floor like a seamless green circus tent." Violent death came to Chico Mendes in the rain forest on December 22, 1988. A labor and environmental activist, Mendes was gunned down by powerful ranchers for organizing resistance to the wholesale burning of the forest. He was a target because he had convinced the government to take back land ranchers had stolen at gunpoint or through graft and then to transform it into "extractive reserves," set aside for the sustainable production of rubber, nuts, and other goods harvested from the living forest. This was not just a local land battle on a remote frontier. Mendes had invented a kind of reverse globalization, creating alliances between his grassroots campaign and the global environmental movement. Some 500 similar killings had gone unprosecuted, but this case would be different. Under international pressure, for the first time Brazilian officials were forced to seek, capture, and try not only an gunman but the person who ordered the killing. In this reissue of the environmental classic *The Burning Season*, with a new introduction by the author, Andrew Revkin artfully interweaves the moving story of Mendes's struggle with the broader natural and human history of the world's largest tropical rain forest. "It became clear," writes Revkin, acclaimed science reporter for *The New York Times*, "that the murder was a microcosm of the larger crime: the unbridled destruction of the last great reservoir of biological diversity on Earth." In his life and untimely death, Mendes forever altered the course of development in the , and he has since become a model for environmental campaigners everywhere.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

An excellent narrative of the history and impact of the Brazilian efforts to exploit the 's wealth of natural and human resources. The life and death of Chico Mendes makes a relatable framework for the history. As a conservative, I am pro-conservation, with an emphasis on ensuring economic impacts of conservation policies benefit all classes. The presents a tremendous challenge to preserve endangered species while supporting the local economy in sustainable ways. Slash and burn cattle ranching is a very short-sighted and unsustainable approach, that benefits only the wealthy landowners. If the economic potential of the many unique plants, insects, and animals can be discovered, developed, and cultivated in the , the wealth and benefit to all of Brazil and the world will be enormous. Lengthy, and a bit dry in places, but very informative well worth reading.

A seemingly unbiased, compelling narrative of the destruction occurring in the Basin. This is a well researched read; it would also make an excellent PBS documentary/drama, or on the 'big screen'.

Good read, sometimes a bit slow, but an eye opener about the importance and the devastation to the rain forest and the brave people trying to save it

So far, it's Run of the mill mystery.

This is about the murder of activist Chico Mendes. A man who devoted his life to protect the rain forest of the . Before going into the murder case the author gives you history and background to understand the circumstances of the murder.

"The Burning Season" discusses the life and importance of Chico Mendes, the founder of Brazil's

ecological movement to preserve and save the rainforest from the destruction by herders, miners, and other companies wanting to exploit the region's rich natural supplies. Mendes, who led a movement from the small frontier town of Acre, became an international celebrity after he went on Brazilian television to fight the destruction of the Amazon Rainforest. With the ban on Argentine beef, Brazilian farmers saw the Amazon as being an emerging area to raise cattle in order to meet the world demand for beef. Miners, who were moving onto Indian lands to mine for gold, copper, and other minerals were also effecting the rainforest's ecology. Mendes, who was a "seringueiro," or "rubber-tapper," relied on the Amazon's vast supply of rubber trees in order to make a living. Seeing that his source of income was in peril with the elimination of trees in order to make room for miners and farmers, Mendes began a national movement to awaken the consciousness of the world about the obvious dangers that lurked nearby if the rainforest was cleared. However, his life will take a tragic turn when he was only starting to gain international awareness and support for his movement. The first few chapters of the book discuss the importance the rainforest plays when it comes to the spectrum of life on earth. The rainforest's vast fauna, flora, and wildlife have allowed many native cultures to survive for centuries, before and after the arrival of the Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors. The Amazon's emergence as a battleground for the discovery and development of cures and vaccines for various diseases and maladies has become more important in recent years, especially as pharmaceutical companies search for an AIDS vaccine. The rest of the book discusses Chico's early life, his career, family, and activism, and all events of importance to his movement after his death, especially the trial that brought those responsible for his death to justice. This is a must-read book for everyone. Chico Mendes' mission to educate the world of the immense importance that Brazil's rainforest is to world's climate control should not die in vain. This important, ethical book will awaken your awareness of what the Amazon's destruction and development will have on the world's population.

This book is a tremendous education about Chico Mendes, and all the political and personal efforts to protect the Amazon. If you are interested in this subject, upon reading this book it's almost like finishing an excellent college course on it. Chico Mendes was born into a poor, rural Amazonian family of rubber tappers and from these very humble beginnings educated himself and worked his way to becoming a worldwide focus of attention on the plight of the Amazon rainforest and its guardians. Like Gandhi, he was a charismatic selfless leader of the poor that faced the continual violent opposition, here from ranchers and the corrupt local militia, and he also responded with successful non-violent actions. This well researched book provides an important perspective from the Brazilians. It is their

country and the whole world has been making demands on their forest because of its global importance both environmentally and economically. Imagine the political struggle in the United States if all of Europe and Asia were trying to get us either to save all the forests of the Pacific Northwest (or the grasslands of the plains, or the forests of the east) or some of them were paying us money, and foreign aid to build roads to increase logging or improving the agricultural output of the area. The development and struggle to manage the land use of the is very complex and the author, Andrew Revkin has illustrated it well. I have always wanted to protect the , its forests, birds and animals but I now also see the importance to protect its people both indigenous and the extractive specialists that Chico Mendes had represented. This book has shown how difficult that is with the pressure of the needs of all the other citizens of Brazil. An excellent book, you will be glad you have read it.

Astonishingly well-written. This writer is very talented. Fascinating & informative book. It took me a long time to read but it was worth it.

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