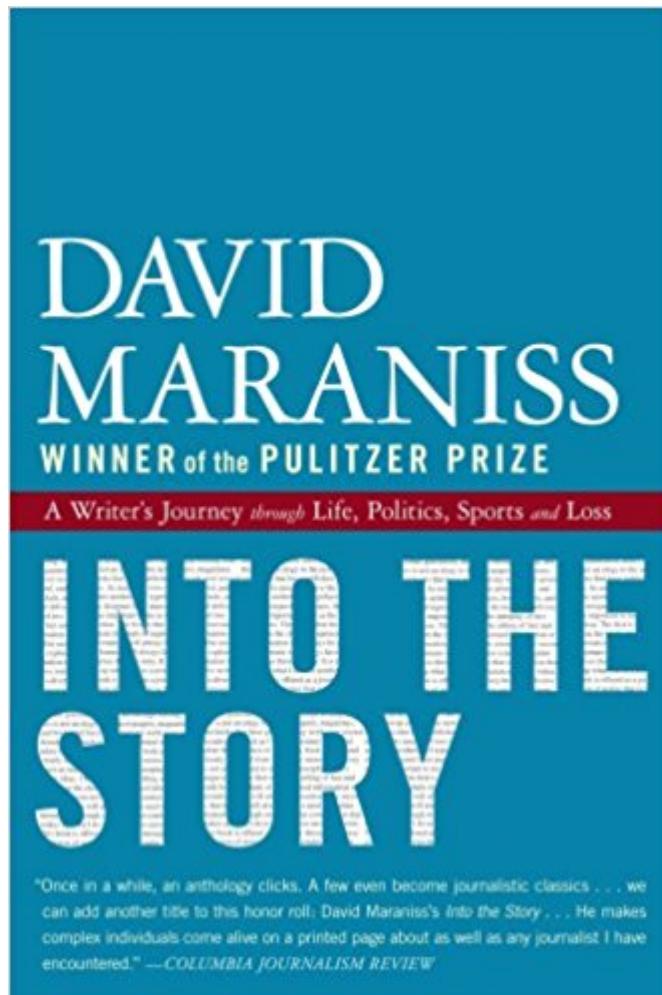


The book was found

Into The Story: A Writer's Journey Through Life, Politics, Sports And Loss



Synopsis

INTO THE STORY is the first collection of the work of David Maraniss, one of the most honored and versatile writers of his generation. The thirty-two stories here cover a rich array of topics, ranging from seminal moments in modern history to intimate personal reflections, each piece illuminated by the author's deep reporting and singular sensibility.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

As a fellow journalist, I read David Maraniss' latest work with fascination. He writes with such elegance; he makes it look effortless. In the preface of 'Into The Story,' Maraniss examines his journalistic philosophy, how he approaches a story and how many 'reporters/writers' of the day seemingly miss the point of objectivity; they try to insert themselves into the story instead of getting out of the way. Search for the truth and report the story accurately. In addition, observation and awareness of the subject cannot be overstated enough. It's a poignant moment. More than that, Maraniss doesn't high brow it, or come across as self-righteous, when he could. He's earned the right. In the first few essays, Maraniss examines the accidental death of his baby sister and the brilliance of his older brother, who is able to juggle academia and minutiae outside of his field. Maraniss writes with glowing admiration, seeded in his love for his siblings. Reporting on the death of his sister, Wendy, he wrote, "Wendy died immediately of a ruptured aorta; literally, a broken heart." Wonderful writing, as painful as that had to be. He touches on writings from previous books

and delves into past essays from the Washington Post, as well as other publications. The tireless research, coupled with an uncanny grasp of language, is the reason why he can effectively cover such diverse genres - from politics to social mores to sportswriting. All in all, one of the best reads in a long time.

David Mariniss is a great writer. He has a gift for narrative and almost always tugs on the heartstrings. Somehow, despite Mariniss's immense talent, *INTO THE STORY*, doesn't quite work. It is hard to explain, but in reading the pieces straight through, they don't hold up as well as they do individually. The best are taken from his great books on Clinton and Lombardi. When reading them, you want to pick up those books again. The others read like "bonus" pieces that on their own satisfy, but in an anthology come back to the same punch line once too often. Perhaps that is what becomes apparent, that he has one tale, a great one, but read so many times in a row it loses its spark.

David Maraniss is one of my favorite authors. I have read all his books, except the one on Al Gore, which I have no interest in. This book is sort of a "Reader's Digest" version of some of his other books. One of my favorite books of all time,

The author tells stories as highly varied as Al Gore's early career as an undercover reporter to the personal history of the author's childhood. My favorite story is the one Dave tells about the time an elephant ate his baseball when he was playing in a sandlot at 8 years old. It made me think about my own childhood and how lucky I was to have a mom that always let do as much horsing around as I wanted. This fact really didn't kick in until my 6th grade birthday party. I busily made out all the invitations to the people I wanted to invite. I gave an invitation to my best friend Trent and later that week he told me he couldn't go because his mom said he couldn't. Never could I imagine my own mother not letting me go to another friend's birthday, in fact it didn't even occur to me that you would even have to ask your mother to go to a birthday party. Of course she would say yes. I think Dave and I have had similar mothers and childhoods. I really enjoyed his stories of growing up as well as the stories about Obama and his dad. Also, I picked this book up at Dollar Tree for \$1.07, a great price for a great read. Now I would like to include a story from my latest book, "Mobilizing Staggering Talent in the Andean Highlands of Colombia." The only thing I knew about the audition is that I needed to report to 70a St at 10 am in the morning. I of course got there at 9.30am, introduced myself to a few people who were either on their computers or cleaning the floors. A

woman named Lucy approached me and asked where I was from and if I spoke English. I confirmed that I was from California and yes I could speak English. She asked for my "scenes." I didn't know what she was talking about so she then spoke to me in English."Do you have your scenes?"It still didn't register. After a few more seconds of uncertainty I guessed that she thought someone may have sent me some kind of instructions or a reason why I was in her office on a Tuesday morning."Did someone tell you why you are here?"No, I was just told to come here at 10 a.m."She smiled at me for a short second and then told me she would be back in a few minutes. I opened my book about wilderness survival and waited. At least I was in doors and in a comfortable chair. A few other people introduced themselves to me as I was waiting. Finally it was time to go upstairs and chat with the people who would decide if they wanted to hire me. When I got upstairs I was introduced to Diana and Rodrigo. They were both dressed so street smart that they would not stick out if they were passengers on the subway in Brooklyn. Diana told me a little about the part of was going to audition and asked me if I had any previous experience acting. I named off a list of Colombian soap operas that would hopefully impress her."Capo 2, Divorciados, La Pre pago, Ruta de la Coca, Sabados Felices and La Parobola de Pablo Escobar."I don't know if this impressed her or Rodrigo, but it gave me more confidence. I didn't mention that my roles in these other soap operas were limited to driving a car, sitting in a hotel lobby, looking out a window as I drank whiskey and opening the door for a jury that was entering a court room.I was then handed my scene and given a few minutes to rehearse.The scene was eerily familiar, I had actually been given a version of this script a month prior by my German friend and urged to practice it. My scene was supposed to be for an American woman aged 20 to 25 but I guessed I pretty much fit the bill. In this scene I was working in as a congressional aide in a district in Florida and the daughter of a woman who disappeared in Colombia is asking me information of how to get in touch with her district's Senato. My role has two lines. First I ask the woman the name of her mother and then tell her she is in the wrong district and that she needs to go somewhere else for help. After the first recorded audition Rodrigo, asks me to "lower my smile" while I am telling the daughter I cant help her. He then tells me that this might seems like I am making fun of her while she is in distress. We do four takes of the scene and I get progesiively more confident during each take. So much so that I puase for up to four seconds and shake my head after she asks me to check the system a second time for her mothers name. After the fourth take Diana asks me if I would like a tea. I say yes and she sends someone to get us tea. While we are waiting she asks me if I am from Los Angeles, I say that I am in a desperate attempt to look more important than I am."Oh really, I am trying to get work as an actriz in the United States. Do you have any

contacts in the movie business?Ã Ã Ã" Yeah, I have a few friends,Ã Ã" lying through my teeth.Ã Ã" They are actors?Ã Ã Ã" My friends work mostly in special effects,Ã Ã" making the fluid transition from reality into acting. Ã Ã" I have one friend who designs the animation at the beginning of the movies when film's logo appears,Ã Ã" I decided to to go as far as to say that I packed the shoots for Patrick Swayze and company in the film Point Break.Ã Ã" Maybe I could take down your information and contact you when I get to the United States?Ã Ã" I pulled out a pen ready to write down my contact information. I decided to feed her one last line before Rodrigo came back.Ã Ã" Getting your screen actors guild card is pretty tough if you don't have any inside connections. I have a friend who's been working on his for about 3 years. He would be a good guy for you to get in touch with.Ã Ã" She spread out a piece of paper in front of me and I started writing my email and phone number down. She quietly pulled out another sheet of paper for her to write down her information for me. Rodrigo came back in and we practiced another scene involving me playing an airline teller. Once again the scene was intended for a white woman, 20 to 25. After finishing Rodrigo and Diana seemed very satisfied with my English skills and encouraged me to stay in touch with them. Before leaving I decided to leave a little more Hollywood snobbery in my wake.Ã Ã" Diana, you should definitely write me an email so you can get in touch with my friend in L.A., he says that he has a big project coming up soon.Ã Ã" At the very least, they would at least feel like they lost out some magical opportunity in Hollywood if they didn't hire me. It was at that point that I decided to be as big a name dropper and exaggerate my skills (or lack of mental stability) to the fullest as possible in any future acting endeavors. A few days later I was invited by an Australian and and USA girl to go with them to a few acting agencies around Bogota and to register with them. While on the bus I told the Australian,Ã Ã" I want to make as big an impact with the first agency as possible, that way I don't get thrown out of their office as usual.Ã Ã" He then turned to his American friend and says,Ã Ã" So you have been thrown out of an office before?Ã Ã Ã Ã" Not physically thrown off but have been asked to leave in the middle of the auditon.Ã Ã Ã Ã" Why?Ã Ã Ã Ã" Different reasons,Ã Ã" I knew finally that they had bought it.Ã Ã" Mostly having to do with removing my clothes while in the waiting room.Ã Ã Ã Ã" Well....Ã Ã" sucking in his breath and trying to be as diplomatic as possible.Ã Ã" Maybe you should have told us this before you got on the bus with us.Ã Ã" Yesterday we worked with a Chinese guy recording Capo 2. He was a little strange in the fact that instead of sitting down between scenes, he would lean against the wall and do the splits. Any time we had a slightly longer break, Ken would pass the time looking at online photos of famous tattoos. After numerous discussion with the director, she decided to give him some lines in Mandarin as a reporter. She asked him to speak a few a lines in a interview setting with the mayor in the last

scene. What she didn't tell him was at which volume he should announce the questions. Therefore his voice in Chinese drowned out all the other people asking questions in Spanish. This went on for a full four seconds until the director called "Cut." She then came up to him and asked he to speak his questions at a lower volume so the Spanish interviewers questions could be heard. I buried my face inside my arm after in the retake, luckily my face wasn't on camera because I was laughing my head off. After we shot the retakes of the scene, the director gave Ken his own scene where he asked a full questions in Mandarin which would be sub-titled when the episode goes on the air. After we finished filming, I walked to the Transmilenio station with a few of the extras from the TV program. I got onto the Transmilenio with a French guy named Thomas, the Colombian coordinator Mauricio and the Chinese Interviewer Ken. During our trip back Thomas discussed with us the time he got slapped four times in the street by his German girlfriend. A short while later I told Ken about my business idea of producing cell phone accessories such as cell phone cases, plastic film screen protectors and express chargers. Ken mentioned that he actually had a Chinese friend already in the business of selling knock off Chinese Blackberries. What set these particular Blackberries apart was the fact that they could hold two SIM cards at the same time, therefore allowing the caller to get the best price per minute on call to friends using the two main service providers in Colombia (Claro and Movistar). On the way home I was surprised to see lines piling up at all the Transmilenio stops in route even though it was nearly 10pm on a Tuesday evening. As the car got fuller and fuller, Ken offered to hold on to people's valuables and protect them for "3 Lucas" (1.50USD) each. It seemed the only good time to get on a Transmilenio was at 5.30am on a Saturday. The previous morning I had a life-altering experience trying to connect on a Transmilenio stop in Recurte at 7.15am. I was waiting at the stop and each time the doors opened people would push from behind and the people leaving the Trans would force their way against the current trying to get out. It seemed that nobody could either board nor could anyone get out. This went on for the next three cars that pulled into the station. Finally I decided I was just going to grab a taxi for the last four blocks of my trip. While on the set that day I made a friend one of the guys in the production crew. His official job was to hold the microphone close enough to the actors so that it could pick up their voices without being seen on camera. When he wasn't holding a microphone up he spent his time grabbing the grips from behind and stroking the cameraman's nonexistent beard. As soon as he found out my name he would say he to me everytime we crossed in the halls of the studio, going as far as to take off his right glove before fist-bumping with me. Towards the end of the night he asked me if I wanted to go out for beers with him and the production crew. After viewing the tattoo on his right forearm I started to have my doubts. On his

right forearm was a Jason Hockey mask dripping blood on top of a mime. The production as I further surveyed the production crew they seemed to better suited to competing a Midget Lacrosse team instead of working in film production. Each one seemed to have a least one of two visible facial scars and their noses seemed to be bent a varying directions depending on the size of the instrument used to break them. "Are you guys going for drinks or going to war?" I asked. They chuckled nervously as if slightly unsure themselves. It seemed that TV production in Colombia was a place which was pretty accepting of many people who couldn't probably assimilate into a normal job in Colombia. I was living proof of this. The foreign people working often gave the Colombians a run for their money terms of spontaneity and life experiences. One of the American guys working on Capo 2 had stayed in the same hostal as I had during my first 34 days in Colombia. His name was Payton and he arrived to Colombian with just over \$1,000USD in his bank account upon arriving. We went to a few job interviews together and Payton actually dressed a lot better than I did. He actually went out and bought a long'sleeved red shirt, a grey tye, pinstriped slacks and leather shoes. His entire ensemble cost less than \$30 at the good will in the United States. He was particularly pleased with the price of his shoes which cost him less than \$5USD and were good as new. At the job interview we were informed that in order to work as legal English teachers in Colombia we would need to pay over \$1000USD to get certified as TFL teachers, spend another \$300 on our visas and then have to leave the country in order to complete the process. Payton didn't have enough money to do this and I certainly wasn't going to cough up that kind of dough, especially after having taught English in Korea which only cost \$300 total for all processing related fees for starting work. And, in Korea they the same teacher with no certification or experiences earns four times what a TFL certified teacher would earn in Latin America. The recruiter was very nice and amicably chatted with us for over an hour as to what the best option for us would be, given our budget. As we got up to leave, I signaled for him to come closer and asked him in hushed tones what he could do for us in terms of under the table jobs. "I can't discuss that kind of thing here at work, but if you would submit your question in writing to my email account I could give you some leads." It seemed everyone in Colombia was willing to do business with a couple of small timers from North America with hardly any legal documents legalizing their existence in Colombia. While we were out on the town, we decided to go to a talent agency and register as actors in Colombia in a vain pursuit to make some easy money. We first arrived to Camera casting a 12.05pm and rang the buzzer. Through a loud speaker the receptionist informed that we would have to come back after lunch at 2pm in order to register at the agency and that no we couldn't come inside and wait until 2pm. We had another 2 hours on our hands so we went to a few used bookstores and then finally

ended at a used furniture store sitting in the shade and reading our used books. By the time 2pm rolled around we were both sufficiently rested and tired of listening to the furniture store's wiener dog yelp at each person who walked by the store. It was on our walk back to the agency when I first learned that Payton's cousin had achieved minor fame for having been Muckully Culkin's Xanax connection in Oklahoma City. After a few minutes we were finally inside the agency. At that point we started filling out paper work and chatting with the gals inside the agency. On the registration form, Payton wasn't sure which phone number to put so I let him use my phone number. The registration form had a few non standard questions which were fun to translate to Payton. One question asked if we knew how to use fire arms, the next questions asked if we were willing to be filled in our underwear, next question asked if we were willing to be filmed while kissing another person and the final question asked if we were willing to be filmed without clothes on. Payton enthusiastically checked each box after telling me a story of a time when he went deaf for 15 minutes after shooting his uncle's 500 (a 500 is the most powerful production handgun you can buy). After the paper work we were invited into the studio to take some photos. While Payton was getting his photos taken he asked the photographer at what point would he start to take the photos of him in his underwear and did he have permission to kiss his handgun on camera while in his underwear. Unfortunately this was the last time Payton was ever seen exiting an agency proving legal work in Colombia. During the next few weeks he decided to make the most out of his Colombian life and spend his money living up his vacation in Colombia. A few days later he purchased a bike, some clothes, went out partying 6 times a week and shortly after that he had to sell his jacket to be able to buy meals. Payton's schedule shifted so abruptly that he started to sleep pretty much all day in the TV and then spend his nights going to different tequila bars around Bogota. During the few hours of the day he wasn't asleep his behavior became more erratic. Usually sometime around 4 am he would walk into the kitchen of the hostal and start slamming the microwave door over and over. The night receptionist handled this situation the best she could. With her limited English she asked Payton to please go back into the TV room and not make so much noise. Shortly after that point Payton was asked to leave the hostal. He wasn't financially able to cover his room charges but landed a job as cook at another hostal and promised to send tourists over to the Sue Hostel on Friday nights to ride the party bus which costed \$40 a person. Of that \$40, Payton was given \$5 off his debt to the Sue Hostel. It was during this period in which I lost track of Payton. But, fortunately he resurfaced later at another taping we did of Capo 2. Accompanying Payton to the Capo 2 recording were two friends Payton brought from the hostel. They were both from England. One was older and reminded me of a cross between Hugh Heffner and Don Knotts. His name was Charles and as soon as I met him he

mentioned that Payton had told him that I used to be an English teacher in Korea. Charles had been an English teacher in Vietnam. "Yeah, I was. How did you like Vietnam?" "I was lucky to get out of there alive. I did a lot of stupid stuff." "Like what?" "One day I got an intertube going down a river through a jungle. While I was on the intertube I started to drink a couple beers. A few hours later it started to get dark and I was in the middle of nowhere. I turned another corner of the river and an old man extended a stick over the river for me to grab. I grabbed the stick and he pulled me a shore. He motioned to me to follow him up a hill. We walked for what could have been 15 minutes or 2 hours. The beers really started to kick in when I started hiking through the jungle. We then came to his mountain hut and I sat down in front of a table. He brought me an English menu with every kind of drug you can imagine. Not really able to decide what I wanted I pointed at whatever was at the top of the second column. He took away the menu and went behind the bar. He started pouring fruit juice into a blender, he then turned the machine on and started throwing mushrooms into the mixer. After throwing in about 15 strawberry-sized mushrooms he brought me my drink. When I told him I started to tell him I didn't have any money to pay for the drink he waved me off and set the drink in front of me. I drank a full litre of his jungle brew and he came back with another full cup. I had a few more and then fell asleep. When I woke up I was underneath a tree in the jungle and my shoes were gone. It was by then the middle of the night. I walked through the jungle until the sun was up and thankfully made it back to where I had started my trip the day before. As soon as I ran into someone in town they just kept staring at my feet. As soon as I looked down I noticed my feet were shredded from walked through the jungle for half a day. I didn't realize how bad the cuts were until the mushrooms wore off several hours later." His friend was noticeably younger and had a working class accent. The friend seemed to be on the same course as Charles. His name was Kagan. He had been born in Turkey but had lived most of his life in England. He had originally come to Colombia to shoot photos for National Geographic but had blown his stipend on drugs. To prove his point he took a camera out of his bag that looked to have about a half foot long lens and started taking photos of the outside of the studio. I told him we could all meet up another time and I could take him around Bogota and show him the best spots to take photos. We agreed to meet up for lunch in Candelaria (the original neighborhood of Bogota where all the backpacking tourists hang out) the next afternoon. We met up at an Israeli restaurant and had a few shawarmas. After we finished the meal Kahn so enjoyed his food that he started chatting up the owner of the restaurant who was from Israel. After telling the owner his name was Kahn the owner asked him where he was from. "I was born in Turkey." "Oh really, where?" "Just outside of Istanbul." "The city of Istanbul has a natural harbor which is

called the Golden Horn. After the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the city was resettled by ethnic Greeks on one side and by Jews on the other side. Now a days the shore is dotted with Muslim, Jewish and Christian cemeteries. The Galata Bridge connects the neighborhoods of the different ethnicities. "Which side of the river do you live on?" "I come from small town, which is now a big city. You have probably never heard of it." "What is the name of the city?" "It is about 50 miles north of Istanbul by the Bosphorus river." "Yeah, but which place?" "Originally I lived with my family on a small ranch but then we moved closer to the city." "OK, but did you live on the West shore or the East shore of the river?"this went on for another 30 minutes until the Israeli guy finally gave up trying to figure out if the Turkish guy was raised Muslim or Christian. We finally left to go take some photos around the historical part of Bogota. It seemed like Kagan wasn't really into taking photos of the presidential square, old churches or historical buildings. He was more into taking photos of streets overflowing with trash and homeless people on the side of the road. "You are quite the photographer," I remarked after watching him snap about 20 photos of a dead dog with flies coming out of its mouth. "I worked in this business long enough to have learned one thing: Smiles Don't Sell." "Probably the one difficult thing about being an extra is to know if you are on camera or not without looking at the camera. The place in Bogota which most resembles the institution in "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" is the Hostel Sue 2. It is here where I have met the highest concentrations of eccentrics. On my first week here I met a guy from the Czech Republic named Chris. I had originally heard stories about this guy from his Australian friend Scott who had met him while being an English teacher in Ukraine. Chris seemed to be the most self assured guy I had met in Colombia. One night while we were eating at a Mongolian Barbecue restaurant two 23 year old girls came into the restaurant to play some Gypsy songs for us. Between songs they would go around accepting donations from the people in the restaurant. Chris went a step further, instead of giving them a few bucks for playing for us he would spoon feed them heaping mouthfuls of his stir fry and use the spoon to redirect any portion of the ethnic flavor that didn't reach its intended target. Keep in mind, this was Chris at his best stone cold sober. When going out to a discoteque with this guy he would direct women towards you every fifteen seconds if you weren't constantly chatting with three girls at the same time. One such time occurred when his friend Scott was playing the loner role at the bar. Chris immediately picked up on this and sent a Colombian girl over to chat with him. "Why don't you like Colombian girls?" she asked Scott. Scott looked up at her without having a clue what she was talking about. "Your friend Chris told me you don't think Colombian girls are friendly." Scott immediately had to regroup and adjust to the situation thrown at him. The next morning at the hostel Scott was a little upset at Chris'

Ã „speed datingÃ „ approach to meeting women in Colombia. A text message apology came from Chris and everything was sorted out by mid day. I still didn't know Chris that well but was invited to have a meal with him the following night with Scott and his Dutch friend William. William had been hanging out with Chris in Medellin for several months prior to their arrival to Bogota. Chris came over with William because William had gotten a girl pregnant in Medellin and was trying to get his Colombian citizenship. At dinner William informed me that the cousin of his Colombian girlfriend was already a grandmother at age 38. While having a mal with William, Scott and Chris I was treated to an in depth discussion on a bug bite Chris had gotten a few weeks prior on the bottom of his foot that was slowly developing into a throbbing red vein that was slowly spreading to the rest of his body. Chris also told us about his favorite B films that took place in caves. The conversation slowly worked it way back to the old country where Scott and Chris had originally met in Ukraine.Ã „In Ukraine it is perfectly legal to buy a stun gun. Our friend bought one that looked like a cell phone. The problem was that the model he brought was just too well designed and after a few beers it was virtually impossible to tell the difference between his stun gun and his real cell phone. I witnessed this first hand one night when I went to my friend's house and his toilet was smashed to pieces. I asked him what had happened and he explained that his cell phone had rang while he was asleep on the toilet from too much partying the night before. While he was foraging through his pants pocket to answer his phone he accidentally grabbed the stun gun instead and sent a pretty serious wave of current through his body and in all the commotion did some pretty serious damage to his toilet.Ã „At that point in the evening I was sure that nobody was going to top that story, but the conversation went on for another hour and the stories just got better from there. When we got back to the hostel Chris showed me his Couchsurfing account and the photos of all the girls he was chatting with. It seemed that he knew more women in Bogota after being here only a few days than most Colombian males meet in a lifetime. The common feature of the women online that Chris was chatting with was their love for piercings, heavy metal music and sparse arm hair. Do you ever wonder where all the people who are deported from the US end up? Well, a very large percentage of these deportees are from Latin America. At a taping I met one such person who had lived in the US for over 20 years. His official name was Jorge Rave, which was pretty appropriate since he was no stranger to the party scene. Jorge came over to the US when he was 5 years old and from there spent the next 24 years of his life in Texas until he was deported for Ã „partyingÃ „ too much. Jorge had a wide a varying background, his grandfather was reported to have been part Italian, Hindu and Indigenous Colombian. This is how Jorge got his dark complexion. After being deported from the US, Jorge was sent to the Bogota airport where he stayed for the next 2 weeks. He

frequently phoned his relatives in Medellin but none seemed to remember quite who he was and if they did, they didn't want a dark relative hanging around their house anyway. He then decided that he couldn't go back to Medellin and that he should stay in Bogota. While living at the airport he met an acting couch named Julio who gave him his phone number and encouraged him to give him a call if he wanted to take some acting classes. Finally Jorge moved out of the airport and settled in a part of the city of Bogota called Santa Fe. Santa Fe is known for being a very popular hangout for prostitutes as well as a great place to get deals on second hand cell phones. What drew Jorge to this particular side of town was the prices of rent. He found a place for a bargain and quickly moved and got a job teaching English. While teaching English he quickly became popular with his students with his stories about growing up in Texas and not being permitted to speak English in his own house. Jorge also had a wide range of Spanish vocabulary seldom heard in South America as well as a few words like "gallino" which were pretty rarely spoken in Colombia. The reason Jorge had gotten such a good deal on his room in Santa Fe was because the water had been turned off to the apartment several weeks prior. Therefore, each morning Jorge would climb the stairs to the upstairs apartment and fill buckets of water that would be used by him during the day to bathe, wash dishes and to cook his meals. Jorge seemed to be having a pretty tough year. Shortly after I had met him he was fired from his teaching job. The weird part about his getting fired was the fact that the girl who turned him into the boss for being late had asked to borrow money from Jorge a few days prior because she hadn't correctly balanced the register at the school. The more I got to know Jorge the more I wanted him to help me translate my first book, "Single Abroad Confessions of a Boyish Man" from English to Spanish. It seemed every time I got in contact with him over the phone he was busy trying to find someone who owed him money or waiting in line at a super market buying more rope to hang up his laundry. Finally after a few more weeks the email finally came when he hit rock bottom. This email was in response to an email I had sent him of a school which was looking for English teachers. I thought the school must be a great place to work just based on its name, "Con Ingles." It seemed to me to be a great place for people wanting to learn how the underworld of English ran.

BRIAN THANK YOU VERY MUCH !! MAN , I AM DOWN AND OUT ...I HAVE BEEN TRANSLATING FOR THIS AMERICAN WHO WAS ROBBED , THEN HAD TO FORCE MY SELF TO GO WASH ALL MY CLOTHES THEN DRY THEM TOOK FOREVER !! BUT I HAVEN'T DONE ANY OF THE STUFF I WAS SUPPOSED TO DO ...I TOTALLY APPOLOGIZE THAT I HAVE NOT GOTTEN BACK TO YOU...DUE TO NOT HAVING MINUTES (ON MY CELL PHONE).... LOOK SO YOU WON'T THINK I AM B.S.ING YOU MAY I GO SPEND THE NIGHT AT YOUR APARTMENT ON THURSDAY AND THEN WE CAN GET SOMETHING DONE ON YOUR

BOOK ..I DO WANT TO TRANSLATE YOUR BOOK AND ALL..BUT I AM BROKE ! NOT EVEN BUS FARE..SO I WALK TO CANDELARIA...I NEED A GOOD PAYING JOB.....CALL ME...Most of his emails started with some sort of provocative statement at the beginning, therefore getting his reader's interest and therefore making them more likely to respond to his emails. I pretty much gave up trying to make sense of the emails past the point of him being in trouble and needing some help. I learned that however fascinating his stories might be I had to wean myself off his drama and go out and find someone else who might better be able to help me with the translation. I had also compiled a list of questions I wanted to ask him about his life in Colombia that probably would never be answered.1 You were born on which date and where?2 From which year to which year did you live in the US?3 What did you do in the airport in Bogota for 2 weeks?4 What did your boss say after you threatened to resign from the english school?5 What is the difference between colombian and usa chicks?6 How many female cousins you have in Medellin who are models?7 What is the difference between colombian now and 24 years ago?8 Your grandfather is hindu, italian, indigenous and what else?9 How did your family in medellin become rich?10 How did you become an agent for actors?11 What were the circumstances in which you meet julio the acting couch in the airport?12 How many Raves did you go to in the US? aren't they mostly just venues far out of the cities in cow fields with a bunch of dudes drinking warm beers?13 Which are the people who are dark in your family and how many are there?14 Do light skinned people in colombia get treated differently than dark'skinned people? what is the difference?15 Did you hang out with mexicans or colombians in texas?16 Why was there no english allowed in your house in texas?

I bought this book to read some of David Maraniss before buying one of his books that takes a deeper commitmenton my part. I thouroughly enjoyed his wrting style and his honesty and fairness. I will DEFINETLY be buying/readingmore books from this author!

I've only gotten through the first couple of chapter of this book, but it seem to be really interesting from a humanistic point of view. He doves into the trials and tribulations of his sister's tragic death and with him coming to terms with is fatality. In addition, delivers correlation between on-site reporting and what actually is on the front-page for viewers to realize. This is definitely a must read as added clarification for those who have one source of information as their guide to journalistic reality.

Very disappointing book. I expected more from this talented journalist who wrote great biographies

of Clemente and Lombardi. The non-judgmental political correctness is annoying as is the trivial mistakes (it was Thurman Munson who Sparky Anderson referred to, not Carlton Fisk). It seems that Maraniss wanted an anthology collection and downloaded his journalistic notebook to create this book. Don't bother.

I HAVE COME TO EXPECT ONLY THE BEST FROM ANY ORDER TENDERED TO ...AND AM NEVER DISAPPOINTED. THIS LATEST D. MARANISS BOOK WAS DELIVERED WELL WITHIN THE GIVEN TIME FRAME...A CONVENIENCE BECAUSE IT WAS A BIRTHDAY GIFT. THANK YOU...ONCE MORE!

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