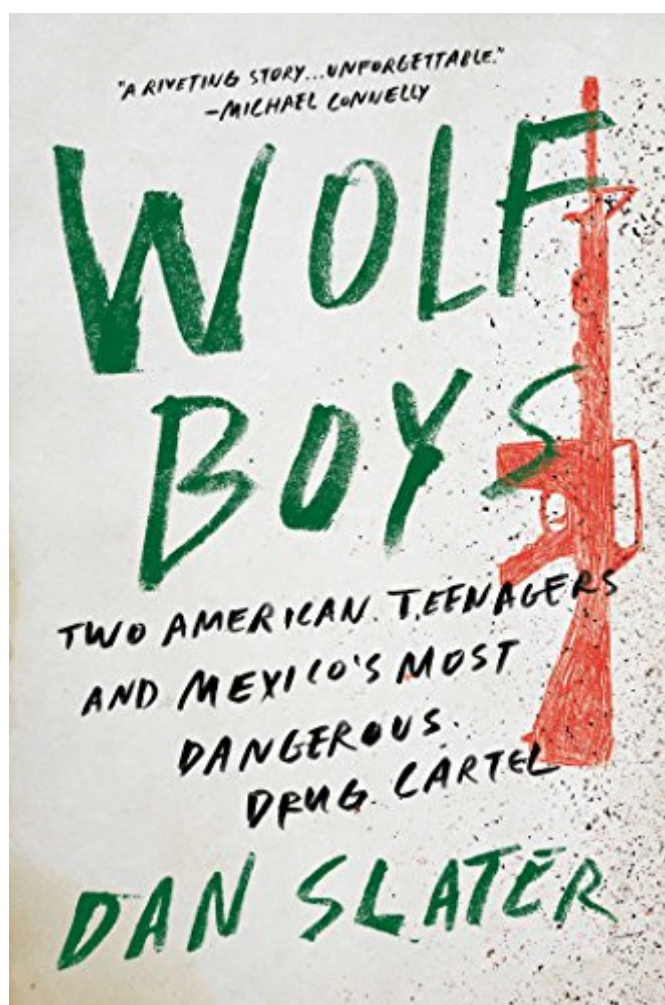


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# Wolf Boys: Two American Teenagers And Mexico's Most Dangerous Drug Cartel



## Synopsis

Chicago Public Library's Best Books of 2016 The story of two American teens recruited as killers for a Mexican cartel, and their pursuit by a Mexican-American detective who realizes the War on Drugs is unwinnable. What's it like to be an employee of a global drug-trafficking organization? And how does a fifteen-year-old American boy go from star quarterback to trained assassin, surging up the cartel corporate ladder? At first glance, Gabriel Cardona is the poster boy American teenager: great athlete, bright, handsome, and charismatic. But the streets of his border town of Laredo, Texas, are poor and dangerous, and it isn't long before Gabriel abandons his promising future for the allure of the Zetas, a drug cartel with roots in the Mexican military. His younger friend Bart, as well as others from Gabriel's childhood, join him in working for the Zetas, boosting cars and smuggling drugs, eventually catching the eye of the cartel's leadership. Meanwhile, Mexican-born Detective Robert Garcia has worked hard all his life and is now struggling to raise his family in America. As violence spills over the border, Detective Garcia's pursuit of the boys, and their cartel leaders, puts him face to face with the urgent consequences of a war he sees as unwinnable. In *Wolf Boys* Dan Slater shares their stories, taking us from the Sierra Madre mountaintops to the dusty, dark alleys of Laredo, Texas, on a harrowing, often brutal journey into the heart of the Mexican drug trade. Gabriel's evolution from good-natured teenager into a feared assassin is as inevitable as Garcia's slow realization of the futile nature of his work. A nonfiction thriller, *Wolf Boys* depicts more than just Gabriel, Bart, and the officers who took them down. It shows, through vivid detail and rich, often moving, narrative, the way in which the border itself is changing, disappearing, and posing new, terrifying, and yet largely unseen threats to American security. Ultimately though, *Wolf Boys* is the intimate story of the *cholos* themselves: boys turned into pawns for cartels. Their stories show how poverty, ideas about identity, and government ignorance have warped the definition of the American dream.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Very good read, made more fascinating by the fact that this is not fiction. If you ever wondered how one gets caught up in the criminal underworld, this is it. Slater does major league research in a tragedy that really happened. Not all the bad guys are victims, but circumstances present themselves that make choosing the right choice difficult. This book reveals the choices made by two American youths, both of which exiting and eventually, tragic. This book should be read in high schools.

Before purchasing this book I had done some previous hunting for more info on this specific case about the two young boys, Rosalio and Gabriel.. I was completely dumbstruck when I first read the article about these young boys turned professional hit men for the rising cartel group, Los Zetas. I needed to know more. Unfortunately, at the time there was not much information regarding American boys being manipulated into joining this cartel groups. The science behind that is unfathomable. The manipulation of young and innocent boys of, especially, those under privileged, is something that needs to be witnessed today. Now. This tragedy calls for a reconstruction of the Latino culture and education; heavy focus on the expectations of a Latino man. Also, I come from a massive gangster film upbringing. I lived off Goodfellas, The Godfather, Sopranos, etc. There's no denying my always jovial, yet unsettling appreciation for the gore and violence that these stories brought to me starting at the age of 5. Thankfully, I have wonderful parents who don't drink or smoke and showered me with love. Had it not been that, had it been a closer to how Rosalio and Gabriel lived and were brought up, I might have turned up facing life in prison for countless skillfully executed assassinations as they do today. I highly recommend this book! For those of you in the

shadows on what's happening to the young boys in the city of Laredo, Texas who face the inner conflict of living the high life of a cartel soldier or struggling the days of an under privileged Latino, who meet very well be shot in as collateral damage after school. I also recommend it to those who revel in the stories of average Joe's climbing up the ranks for a mafia/cartel brotherhood. Guns. Sweat. Trigger. Millions of dollars and the same time watching your back for the DEA.

I met the author when he was doing research for another project -- he told me about this book he had just finished so because I knew the author I wanted to read it even though it is not my normal genre. I really enjoyed the book -- I learned so much about a life I had no idea about. The book read easily and I didn't want to put it down at times especially when the book talked about the specific lives of the teens who were drawn to the cartel life. I'm still trying to get my mind around that type of lifestyle and the fact that I was actually a bit concerned for the author's safety after I realized where he put himself in order to do the needed research.

Wolf Boys was a great read. I thoroughly enjoyed it. It reminded me a lot of the way David Simon's HBO series, the Wire, tackled the complex socio-economic issues in Baltimore. The author, Dan Slater, packed so much into this book. I found the core story of the Laredo, Texas adolescents turned trained assassins very compelling, but there's so much more here as well. It's obvious Slater took great care in researching and telling this story. He has clearly thought a lot about the issues presented in it and cares about those affected. It's a cautionary tale at its root, certainly, but it also speaks to so many issues that are relevant today -- such as, border security, our Nation's war on drugs, and immigration to name a few. The inside information on Mexico's drug cartels and drug smuggling fascinated me as well; such as, the increasing price of cocaine as it traveled north from Texas (\$10.5k/kilo) to NYC (\$30k); the profit sharing ploys and salaries given to the young assassins; the money laundering with race horses. There's really a ton of information for such a quick read. Really well done.

Take the blindfold off...this is what happens in the USA and Mexico. A good read, keeps you engaged since it swaps from character to character. Finished reading it in two days, it reads fast. South Texas and Northern Mexico will have many drug issues, and this book just clarifies why the drug war will never end- money, addiction, and power.

This novel is a great read. Thank you. I live in Australia, Mexico has always been on my travel list, in

2009 my wife and I decided that it was way too dangerous to go, so we went to Colombia instead!! Anyway after following the drug war and reading plenty of books about the narco's and how they have been allowed to grow into what we see today, it was refreshing and exciting to read a book that provides the best insight into what was going on with the Zeta's in the early days of the fiasco.

I was fascinated by the devolution of the main characters into assassins against the historical backdrop of the war on drugs and the political history of both Mexico and America. It made me think of how soldiers are indoctrinated the world over to serve the economic and political interests of the wealthy and powerful. It's a process we employ time and time again without regard to the effects on the actors or the victims.

Based on the MPR interview with the author, I expected a more in depth/ visceral account of the story. I didn't feel that the character development of the main individuals involved was all that good. Not near as interesting as anticipated. I realize it's not a fictitious story, but greater emphasis on fast moving narrative seemed to be what was promised during the radio interview with the author.

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