



## Kings of Cocaine

By Guy Gugliotta, Jeff Leen

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This is the story of the most successful cocaine dealers in the world: Pablo Escobar Gaviria, Jorge Luis Ochoa Vasquez, Carlos Lehder Rivas and Jose Gonzalo Rodriguez Gacha. In the 1980s they controlled more than fifty percent of the cocaine flowing into the United States. The cocaine trade is capitalism on overdrive -- supply meeting demand on exponential levels. Here you'll find the story of how the modern cocaine business started and how it turned a rag tag group of hippies and sociopaths into regal kings as they stumbled from small-time suitcase smuggling to levels of unimaginable sophistication and daring. The \$2 billion dollar system eventually became so complex that it required the manipulation of world leaders, corruption of revolutionary movements and the worst kind of violence to protect.

Guy Gugliotta is a former national reporter for The Washington Post and foreign correspondent for The Miami Herald. He is currently based in New York, where he writes about science, history and Latin America for magazines and newspapers, among them Smithsonian, Wired, Discover and The New York Times. He is the author of the forthcoming Freedomâ€™s Cap, the Building of the U.S. Capitol and the Coming of the Civil War, to be published in early 2012 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Jeff Leen is the investigations editor for The Washington Post. As a reporter or an editor, he has worked on investigations have have been honored with seven Pulitzer Prizes. He is also the author of The Queen of the Ring: Sex, Muscles, Diamonds and the Making of an American Legend.

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## **Kings of Cocaine** By Guy Gugliotta, Jeff Leen Bibliography

- Rank: #1109769 in Books
- Published on: 1990-04
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 7.00" h x 4.50" w x 1.50" l,
- Binding: Paperback
- 688 pages

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In a riveting narrative based on their prize-winning series in the Miami Herald, Gugliotta and Leen expose in alarming, well-documented and vivid detail the estimated \$8 billion-a-year Colombian cartel that controls 80% of the world's cocaine market. In their account, the complex hierarchy of the cartel directs an international operation that resembles and surpasses many multinational corporations in efficiency and sophisticated marketing techniques. Run by a small group of murderous young overlords, the organization has thousands of employees--from peasants and pilots to lawyers and hit-men. Initially, corrupt bank and government officials in Colombia favored the cartel's growth. However, this changed after the cartel's successful opposition to an extradition treaty between Colombia and the U.S., which involved a reign of terror against Colombian institutions. The extended activities of the cocaine barons in Central America have compromised U.S. national interests, the authors maintain, especially in the case of reported contra- cartel links and alleged drug trafficking by Panama's Noriega. Despite concerted law enforcement efforts, the cartel still thrives. Major ad/promo.

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From Library Journal

In what is the most gripping, complete account yet of this powerful cocaine cartel, the authors, Miami Herald reporters, have painted an incisive and shocking picture of the men and money involved. The lives and characters of the drug lords are thoroughly explored, including the trial of Carlos Lehder, who recently became the first Cartel leader to be sentenced to prison in the United States. Even those libraries with Paul Eddy's *The Cocaine Wars: Murder, Money, Corruption, and the World's Most Valuable Commodity* ( LJ 7/88) and Elaine Shannon's *Desperadoes: Latin Drug Lords, U.S. Lawmen, and the War America Can't Win* ( LJ 11/15/88) should purchase this. Highly recommended.

- Sally G. Waters, Stetson Law Lib., St. Petersburg, Fla.

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