Blood Diamonds Greg Campbell

Non-Fiction

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The Unknown Horrors of the Diamond Trade

Review by Alec

A goose-bump giving, heart wrenching book about the dangerous diamond trade in Sierra Leone is Blood Diamonds, Greg Campbell had the experience of a lifetime by sneaking in and uncovering all the unspeakable horrors of the diamond trade. He expresses his incredible experiences with superb imagery in this gruesome book. Greg Campbell, the author of Blood Diamonds has won many awards such as the Colorado book of the year. Campbell, a very dedicated worker, has traveled all over the globe to many exotic places such as Sierra Leone and the Balkans.

WARNING: THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART. Campbell traveled into the depths of Sierra Leone to uncover the harsh truth of the diamond trade. He discovers that the Revolutionary United Force (RUF) soldiers, a large army of rebels in Sierra Leone, have taken over the diamond trade and have gone to extreme measures to hold on. This illegal trade has created millions of dollars for the RUF and some surrounding countries that participate by providing weapons or money in exchange for the precious diamonds. The RUF wanted to get rid of the diamonds that they mined any way possible, that included selling to civilians and they hated when a deal didn’t work. “The RUF man began to squeal. He told me I was a dead man for backing out of a deal that was never made. ‘RUF gon’ f**k you up!’ He screeched before the line went dead.” The RUF man was very nervous and scared because if
caught, he would be arrested on the spot and questioned about the specifics of the rebel leaders. Campbell travels around talking to many civilians about their experiences of mining, being recruited and trading the precious diamonds. They tell him everything from mining and the dangers of trying to steal diamonds to how the trade has created illegal jobs for them by selling these unlawfully mined diamonds.

*Blood Diamonds* had many ups and downs throughout the story. Campbell, at times, had me speeding through the book not wanting to put it down with some incredible stories of some individuals that have overcome all the odds to have a normal life, but then I would have trouble reading through. Some of the stories lacked the interesting plot about the RUF and focused more on the political side. Since he told many individual stories, I felt as I came upon a story that wasn’t as intriguing as the others I could simply skip it and not have it affect my comprehension of the plot at all. All of the stories should be read though because at the end of each one you can see if the person has persevered through the tough times or let the thought of all the money that they could make go to their head.

Throughout the book, Campbell’s extraordinary use of imagery, metaphors, and word choice made me truly feel that I had been there with him and experienced all the horrors the Sierra Leoneans had experienced and are still experiencing. Campbell describes the scenery of Freetown, a city where many victims of the war over the diamonds go to when they escape the RUF. “The city claws its way up the mountains, creeping into the jungle like a disease. At street level the city is a chaos of mud, wrecked cars, zinc roofs, and palm trees all tied together with all-weather plastic sheeting.” 3

High school students that like gruesomeness should read *Blood Diamonds*. Many high school students are unaware of the inhumane actions that occur around the world daily and this is no exception. Even if some students are not interested in this genre of book or, specifically the topic of
current events in general they still should expose themselves to what is happening in the world around them.