

A Review of *Blood Diamonds*
By Greg Campbell
Non-Fiction
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A Look into the Land Where We Turned a Blind Eye
By bb

Nice diamond ring you have on your finger! Do you want to know how many people were killed while mining that diamond?

Blood Diamonds by Greg Campbell is the eye-opening story revealing the horrifying truth of how the world's most precious stones are mined. Campbell shares his experiences witnessing the poverty stricken, war-torn African country, Sierra Leone. Testimonies of the Sierra Leoneans who happened to be caught in the middle of the horrific civil war, provide a spine-chilling read. Campbell reveals how local rebels would maliciously ravage villages of innocent civilians, looking for recruits for the mines and the army.

“The blade slammed through the bones of his arm just above the wrist. The hand came off with one clean chop....” Campbell has a knack for using gruesome description. In these lines, using graphic detail, he explains how the Revolutionary United Front, the rebel militia, amputates people's hands so they can't have the opportunity to mine the diamonds they want. If you are squeamish, *Blood Diamonds* is not for you. For those who enjoy reading stories about conflict and foreign affairs, this book is the perfect fit.

Campbell uses disturbing imagery to help depict the savagery of the RUF and the horrible acts of violence they inflict on innocent civilians. Campbell uses his vast knowledge of journalism to

effectively describe the situations at hand. He did a great job informing the reader of the conflicts in the book. At one point, he takes the reader's focus to a city in Sierra Leone, Freetown, where the city lives up to its name. Despite being a disgusting slum city filled with muck and homeless people, refugees of the civil war are attracted to the lack of RUF members in the city and the lack of conflict. The country's capital city, Freetown, is the perfect symbol of the current state of Sierra Leone. It's in terrible shape. "Freetown's name is so ironic that no one even bothers to point it out. Its English founders... had certainly envisioned a different future," Campbell stated.

"One of the best ways to end the trade of conflict diamonds is to end conflict where diamonds are found. If you have no war, you have no problem." This is a passage in the book that really stands out. It's suggesting an idea that sounds so simple but Campbell contradicts the excerpt he wrote by saying this conflict will most likely never end. I enjoyed how he always discussed the deeper roots of conflict in these third world countries. There will always be a recourse of desire stumbled upon in Africa and with the valuable discovery comes the conflict. It's a never-ending cycle of war.

Blood Diamonds was a fantastic read that made me feel sympathy for the Sierra Leoneans devastated by the behemoth that is the diamond industry. Campbell certainly knows how to get his points across to the reader. However, a major publication such as *Blood Diamonds* can't always engage the reader. There were times in the book where I thought that Campbell started getting too factual and lost my full attention. At points, I felt I could skim past some parts of the book without missing details. People who prefer a fact full read will certainly enjoy *Blood Diamonds*. Personally, I felt this book had too many unimportant details. Negatives aside, this book was a great read. Because of Greg Campbell, I look at diamonds with a completely changed perspective and I feel educated about the subject of diamond sales.

Greg Campbell is a highly decorated journalist who has won many major awards for some of his publications. Campbell has won more than two-dozen journalism awards including the Inland

Press Association and the Colorado Press Association. Including *Blood Diamonds*, Campbell has four books published up to date; *The Road To Kosovo*, *Pot Inc.*, and *Flawless*. Campbell also has an Oscar Award winning movie based off his book *Blood Diamonds* starring Leonardo DiCaprio. (The movie is excellent and is also a must-watch for anyone who thoroughly enjoyed reading the book.) High school students should read *Blood Diamonds* because many kids live their lives unaware of the monstrosities occurring in different countries such as Africa. Many students need to wake up and understand that not everyone can live peacefully, or luxuriously. Many children are arrogant and boast about the material objects they have, not knowing that people in third-world countries can be killed for the resources they live on top of, especially diamonds.

In an email exchange with the author, I asked him why he thinks it is so important for people to read *Blood Diamonds*. His response:

"Even though my book was published in 2002, the issue of conflict diamonds remains important, especially as new conflicts flare up throughout Africa. Whether it's diamonds or other precious minerals, their use to fund conflicts is a global problem that can only be addressed by consumers demanding proof of origin for their luxury goods, electronics and other purchases. I hope my book will continue to inform future generations of what's at stake if this issue is ignored."