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### Savages

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**The Dark Side of Ecaudor**, March 2, 2010

By [Linda Ballou "Linda Ballou"](#) (Los Angeles) - [See all my reviews](#)

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This review is from: **Savages (Paperback)**

I was a slap-happy travel writer looking forward to experiencing the most bio-diverse country on the plant for its size. Ecaudor is touted as a paradise for nature lovers with 46 different eco-systems, home to 1,600 bird species, 250 mammals, 358 amphibians 345 reptiles and 4,500 butterflies. Then I read Joe Kane's horrifying expose of what has been taking place in the Amazon forests of Ecuador in a region called the Oriente since the 1970's. Oil companies have systematically been destroying the forests, polluting the rivers with toxins that are destroying the beauty of the place and literally killing the indigenous people with toxic wastes and oil spills. The Trans-Ecuadorian Pipeline has suffered more than 60 major ruptures since 1972, spilling 614,000 barrels of oil into rivers and streams--more than two Exxon Valdez tankers' worth. How can this be happening in the poster child for eco-tourism? How can this continue in a world that is supposedly enlightened to the fact that the forests are the lungs of the planet and hold untapped medicinal knowledge? Kane lived with the Hourani Indians in their villages, and befriended their greatest leaders, while maintaining a journalist's objectivity. His book is a sensitive, caring, thoroughly researched, deep look into the abuses of the oil companies. His account ends in 1996, but the travesties live on. "If oil exploration continues at the current rate, in another 30 years oil reserves will be exhausted, the last ancient Amazon cultures decimated and there won't be any wilderness left." Thomas Cook, Traveller's Guide, 2008. I am now saddened beyond words, but still looking forward to seeing what remains of Ecuador's glorious bounty. If the United States, the chief exploiter of Ecuador's natural resources, weans itself off oil there could be hope of a recovery before the entire Ecaudorian Amazon forest is fouled and the Indians way of life gone forever.

[..]

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**Huaoranis understood**, March 22, 2006

By [Nancy Collins-Moussa "rainforest advocate"](#) (Glendale,CA United States)  
 - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: **Savages (Paperback)**

I found this book very readable and as I was reading it I started to feel like I knew the Huaoranis and feel their pain. Joe Kane may be an anthropologist but he does not write in a manner that makes you think that the Huaoranis are his study subjects. By the time I finished the book I felt like I had been there with them and certainly understood them much better than before. I also became very aware of the horrific destruction caused by the oil companies.

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#### This product



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**Jaw-Dropper**, February 17, 2006

By [Sean McCulley](#) - [See all my reviews](#)

**This review is from: Savages (Paperback)**

He paints the Huaorani people in a very human light. The Huaorani are a people very misunderstood; they are portrayed by others as vicious, savage, and ignorant people and are exploited by powerful outside forces. This book has opened my eyes to a culture that I never knew existed, one which I now love and am deeply fascinated by. I would whole-heartedly recommend this book to anyone looking for more than an adventure. Be prepared to have your horizons widened.

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1 of 3 people found the following review helpful:

**Offers some compelling points**, April 14, 2005

By [Sam Monroe](#) (Miami, FL) - [See all my reviews](#)

**This review is from: Savages (Paperback)**

I had to read this book for a geology class in college and it definitely raises some interesting points about oil companies, labor abuse laws, poverty, monopoly, and how the people of the land are affected by drilling. The book is all over the place at some points, however, as pages upon pages of detail are given about a boat expedition leading to nowhere while important facts about the oil companies are limited to concise paragraph descriptions.

While I enjoyed the book overall, I wish Kane would have focused more on the importance of what he was trying to say. I understand he had to be objective, but there's not much to be objective about involving the wipeout of an entire culture. Recommended for those interested in environmental science and human rights.

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5 of 6 people found the following review helpful:

**What is a Savage?**, April 11, 2004

By [Justin Bean "Post-college Twenty-something wh..."](#) (Ann Arbor, MI) - [See all my reviews](#)

**This review is from: Savages (Paperback)**

Joe Kane, author of best selling 'Running the Amazon', has tackled a subject often thought of as being the job of anthropologists and the like. As a reporter, Kane has done a good job of relaying details such as the environment the Huaorani live in and the details of the oil industry that looms over their part of the Ecuadorian Amazon. As mentioned in another review, the anthropological insight Kane offers in response to Huaorani culture and how it has changed and adapted to its situation leaves something to be desired. That said, I do not find this to be a problem. Kane is writing for an audience that would probably find most anthropological scholarly texts dry and uninteresting, but he has managed to explain the conflict that has arisen due to oil exploitation in the rainforest, all the while demonstrating the effects this exploitation has on humans in the area. I was pleased to see that Kane demonstrated how the Huaorani have formed a sort of resistance to the destruction of the environment they call home by using conduits provided by external political groups, thus demonstrating how the marginalized make themselves known. The book is engagingly written and Kane, while unable to hide his anti-corporate and anti-oil exploitation sentiments (with which I agree), has made a worthy case for the halting of oil exploitation at the level it was (and still is) being carried on in the Amazon.

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6 of 8 people found the following review helpful:

**Another good one by Joe Kane**, November 17, 2003

By [Peggy Vincent "author and reader"](#) (Oakland, CA) - [See all my reviews](#)

**This review is from: Savages (Paperback)**

Have you read Kane's Running the Amazon? Here's another good one. It even won the Bay Area Book Reviewers Assoc Award in 1995. Kane travels to Ecuador to live for a while with the Huaorani tribal people as their Stone Age culture bumps against

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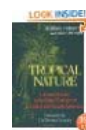
**Savages: A Novel** by Don Winslow (Hardcover - July 13, 2010)

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the 20th Century.

The Huaorani eventually befriended Kane, but at the beginning, it was just as likely that they might murder him, as they had fairly recently killed a missionary and several others they considered enemies. Something about Kane made them feel comfortable - lucky for him.

Kane intersperses magical vignettes of tribal life with historical and sociological information in a way that makes his book imminently readable by ordinary readers like me as well as my scholars and sociologists.

It's a good one.

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11 of 13 people found the following review helpful:

**A good memoir.**, June 18, 2002

By [Type12point](#) (Ottawa, ON) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: **Savages (Paperback)**

June 18, 2002

This is a well written book, but not an inclusive piece of research. The author writes of his experiences in South America with skill and passion, but a reader should come to the story with the full knowledge that he is reading the work of an interested observer and not that of an anthropologist, or sociologist, or even much of an activist.

Still, I'd recommend this book to someone who wouldn't normally be interested in the subject matter. It's a

pleasurable and moving read. Author Joe Kane seems more interested in the people he met during his travels than in cleansing or condemning his various subjects. Persons truly interested in the puzzle that is big oil, bad politics and embattled natives in South America, however, will probably finish `Savages' with as many questions as answers.

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0 of 20 people found the following review helpful:

**A bit implausible**, April 7, 2002

By [Martin Pruijmers](#) (Spijkenisse Netherlands) - [See all my reviews](#)

This review is from: **Savages (Paperback)**

Although this book gives a clear warning about the effects of "Civilized world"'s greed for oil, it is somewhat too much fictionalized to be fully credible. It's a pity, because the basic idea is good.

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13 of 37 people found the following review helpful:

**Who is the savage here?**, February 26, 2002

By **A Customer**

This review is from: **Savages (Paperback)**

Kane seems to think there is some irony in titling his book "Savages", but instead it adds to the racist overtones found in his faux anthropological approach to his "field work". The oversimplifications found in this book are upsetting to those of us who spend years working with native populations, and this book does little to halt harmful visions of native peoples. This is an ecotourist approach to a complex culture and we are left with more questions than answers, and this book in many ways capitalizes on the plight of these people.

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26 of 26 people found the following review helpful:

**A reaction from an anthropologist**, November 11, 2001

By **A Customer**

This review is from: **Savages (Paperback)**

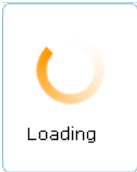
Although this book has been criticized by people with a background in anthropology, as a practicing anthropologist (with research expertise in media studies), I beg to disagree. Certainly, the book has weaknesses, and the fieldwork it is based on was flawed. Yet it presents a balanced view of Amazon peoples -- if one reads carefully one finds that they are NOT merely portrayed as "noble savages." Moreover, the book has a chance of reaching a FAR greater audience than most anthropology works ever do. I aspire to write as compellingly as Kane; it's about time anthropology had more of an impact on the world. I have done research and writing that is critical of journalists and journalism, but I'm aware that anthropological fieldwork is far from perfect, either. Instead of taking pot shots at a nuanced, in-depth view of the geo-political problems of indigenous peoples, we should celebrate the possibilities of collaborating with journalists as careful and sensitive as Kane.

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