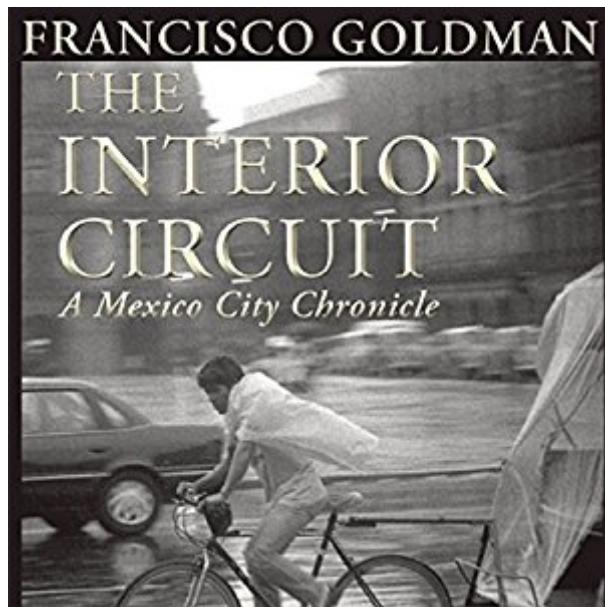


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The Interior Circuit: A Mexico City Chronicle



Synopsis

Coming off the most successful book of a decorated career - *Say Her Name* - The Interior Circuit is Francisco Goldman's timely and provocative journey into the heart of Mexico City. The Interior Circuit is Goldman's story of his emergence from grief five years after his wife's death, symbolized by his attempt to overcome his fear of driving in the city. Embracing the DF (Mexico City) as his home, Goldman explores and celebrates the city, which stands defiantly apart from so many of the social ills and violence wracking Mexico. This is the chronicle of an awakening, both personal and political, "interior" and "exterior", to the meaning and responsibilities of home. Mexico's narco war rages on and, with the restoration of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (the PRI) to power in the summer's 2012 elections, the DF's special apartness seems threatened. In the summer of 2013, when Mexican organized crime violence and death erupts in the city in an unprecedented way, Goldman sets out to try to understand the menacing challenges the city now faces. By turns exuberant, poetic, reportorial, philosophic, and urgent, *The Interior Circuit* fuses a personal journey to an account of one of the world's most remarkable and often misunderstood cities.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

A fascinating chronicle, of both Mexico City, or DF as it's usually referred to by "chilangos," natives of DF, and the life of author Francisco Goldman. He reveals a Mexico City far richer in interest than the narrow journalistic stories concerning it would have one believe. The book intertwines current events in DF with the life, both past and present, of author Goldman. Although not a native, author Goldman, the US born son of a Guatemalan mother and a Jewish father, has an abiding affection

and curiosity for the city. A central figure in the book is that of his late wife, Aura, who died in a tragic accident five years previous to the time the book was written. Goldman details the difficulties he's had in dealing with her demise, often sinking into various bad habits. He treasures the friendships he's been able to maintain. They, as much as anything else, have helped get back on a sure footing. One section of the book deals with the disappearance, or, as he terms it in Spanish, the "leviton," or literally, lifting, of a group of young people from an after hours nightclub in the posh DF neighborhood called Condesa. Reading all the twists and turns in the investigation, and the difficulty of ever being sure that one can get an accurate account from any division of the government, reveals much of the current state of corruption so prevalent in all levels of official Mexico. Goldman, however, decries the overweening emphasis on the "narco" culture of Mexico. In brief but revealing portraits of friends and acquaintances, he shows us a Mexico suffused with arts and culture, a Mexico as alive and thriving culturally as any of the more celebrated international capitals of culture.

When I reviewed Francisco Goldman's 2011 autobiographical novel, *SAY HER NAME*, the story of his love affair and marriage to Aura Estrada and her death in a bodysurfing accident, I described it as a distinctive for the unrelenting candor of its journey through the twinned emotions of love and grief. • That tragedy remains a preoccupation of *THE INTERIOR CIRCUIT*, but this is a much different book, one that abandons the veil of fiction and takes up the mantle of memoir and journalism. Goldman successfully negotiates that transition because he retains his gifts of incisive observation, flashing wit, intense curiosity about his interior life and the lives of those around him, and his ability to express himself in vivid prose. Goldman describes the summer of 2012 he spent in Mexico City (more precisely the Distrito Federal, or DF, the name by which Mexico City proper is known) five years after Aura's death, as one "when it turned out that I didn't get to where I'd hoped to arrive quite by following the plan I'd laid out." In this non-chronological account, what he calls his "circuitous route," refers both to his struggle to emerge from the "lonely realm of grief" he continues to inhabit following Aura's death and his quixotic plan to take driving lessons, hoping they'll help him overcome his unease about coping with Mexico City's chaotic traffic, most notably, its Circuito Interior, the "inner ring expressway --- packed with dense traffic at almost any hour and freewheeling nevertheless, unless bottlenecked to a complete stop." Even with the aid of a driving instructor (hired, to avoid embarrassment, on the pretext that he wants to learn how to drive a stick shift), Goldman's project turns out to be largely a fool's errand.

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