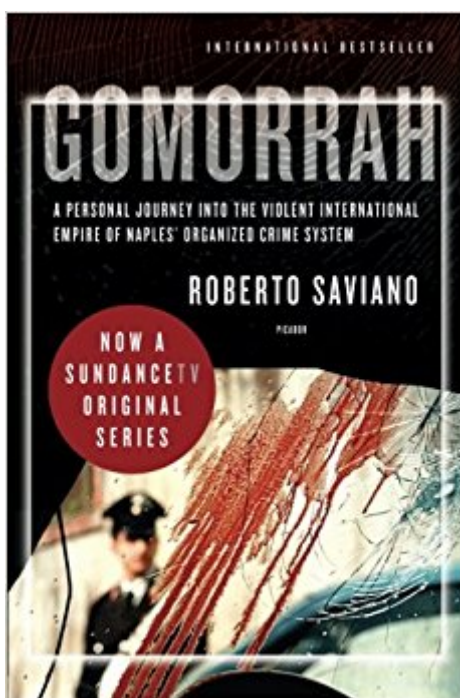


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Gomorra: A Personal Journey Into The Violent International Empire Of Naples' Organized Crime System



Synopsis

The basis of the Sundance TV series Gomorrah A New York Times Notable Book of the YearA groundbreaking, unprecedented bestseller in Italy, Roberto Saviano's insider account traces the decline of the city of Naples under the rule of the Camorra, an organized crime network more powerful and violent than the Mafia. The Camorra is an elaborate, international system dealing in drugs, high fashion, construction, and toxic waste, and its influence has entirely transformed life in Campania, the province surrounding Naples. Since seeing his first murder victim, at thirteen, Roberto Saviano has watched the changes in his home city. For Gomorrah, he disappeared into the Camorra and witnessed up close the drug cartel's audacious, sophisticated, and far-reaching corruption that has paralyzed his home city and introduced the world to a new breed of organized crime.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Saviano's landmark exposé of the demoralizing effects of organized crime in his homebase of Naples, Italy, is an incredible tale that loses its power in this long-winded reading by veteran Kramer. Droning on in a matter-of-fact tone, Kramer loses the author's personal approach and fails to bring life to the touching memoir. Uninspired and indifferent, Kramer often sounds tired, struggling to keep himself interested, much less the listener. With slurred, often muffled narration, Kramer makes no attempt to engage his audience, a shame considering the rather fervent account that Saviano manages to recreate given his relationship with a deadly organized crime outfit and extensive research into the topic. Listening to Kramer over nine discs becomes a monotonous task

rather than the entrancing experience that it should be. An utterly disappointing reading that fails to capture the gusto of Saviano's work. Simultaneous release with the FSG hardcover (Reviews, Aug. 13). Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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Starred Review Saviano, an investigative journalist, uses the port city of Naples as an entry point into the nefarious dealings of the Italian crime network, the Camorra, which has a stranglehold on the global economy through its control of the international clothing market, art collecting, drug dealing, construction trades, and toxic waste disposal. Naples is the epicenter for the criminal cartel since, as Saviano says, "Everything that exists passes through here." At a time when Chinese exports of pet food and seafood have become suspect, Saviano provides a revealing examination of the ways in which black-market profit mongering and lack of regulations ruin workers' lives and endanger us all. This investigation, published in Italy in 2006, became a best-seller and won the Viareggio Literary Prize. It's a stunner of a book, as accessible to American audiences, through its searing style and timely investigation, as it is to Italians. Perhaps most importantly, Saviano's accusations are utterly convincing because of his undercover investigations: in the best Upton Sinclair tradition, he worked at a Chinese textile factory in Naples, at a construction site, even as a waiter at a Camorra family wedding. Throughout, he relies on the significant detail to carry his outrage: scores of frozen Chinese bodies spilling out onto a dock; the sight of a Chinese factory worker at the bottom of a well, beaten and stabbed to death after refusing sex with her boss. Through his firsthand observation and interviews, he lays bare the abuses fed by this well-oiled and well-hidden criminal system. Devastating. Fletcher, Connie

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An interesting look into the underworld of southern Italy. this book was recommended to me by an Italian friend. It wasn't a novel. It is a look into the inner workings of the Italian underworld. Most of the references to different cities and areas of Italy were lost on me. It goes into how the various factions of the underworld function and what a huge part of the economy is under their influence. There are some thought provoking revelations here about the interface between obvious criminal activities such as drug dealing or prostitution, and the subtle taking over of "legitimate businesses" such as the cement industry or the trash removal industry. It is scary to learn about these things. IT definitely got me thinking about how certain industries are controlled in the USA. Who knows what is really going on in the USA?

It's difficult to add any fresh accolades to the praise surrounding Saviano's book, so we'll take for granted that it is indeed a unique, timely, and courageous work of investigative journalism. However, Saviano's own ancestral connection to the corrupted Neopolitan soil allows for the author to transcend the genre's objective accounts of facts and figures, and imbue the pages with an agonized longing for hope, for a closure that may never come. Other reviews have suggested the book is poorly translated, but I didn't find that to be the case at all. Saviano's writing is intelligent, idiomatic, and his voice comes through clearly. Some passages stay with you, almost like a mantra, and I'm sure you'll find particular images haunting you long after you've finished reading. The mob portrayed in Gomorrah is a hydra, constantly reinventing itself, regionally endemic and spreading. It isn't sexy or glamorous. Its trade in toxic waste alone is slowly murdering entire portions of Southern Italy, so that even when the Camorra's hit squads aren't gunning down their victims, its business practices alone claim countless more lives. And the violence Saviano recounts, much of it dedicated not to internecine warfare as one would suppose, but to innocent bystanders or those brave enough to speak out, is unspeakably brutal, and doesn't necessarily end with death. Camorra smear campaigns are launched immediately following an assassination, posthumously associating the most noble citizens to the same crimes and corruption they fought so hard against during life, so that they won't garner public sympathy or inspire further activism. Saviano's book is one of the most important true crime books ever written, and I say that having read my share of them. I used the word "important" to mean that it doesn't merely inform and educate, as good journalism should, but completely transforms the reader's perception of how crime and economy are linked, and what the nature of the fallout really is. Saviano achieves what is seemingly an impossible task--to expose and quantify the runaway train of Italian organized crime in all its incarnations, balancing broad accounts of a land desolated by greed and death with personal stories of those affected by the carnage.

This book started out with numerous metaphors and information that required further investigation. Saviano writes under the assumption you will know everyone and everything he mentions. Very interesting way of writing. There was lots of name dropping...many many names. Saviano kept me hooked with his descriptive, almost poetic, way of writing, but at times made me want to pull my hair out to know what point he was getting at. I think it goes without saying however. Saviano jumps back and forth in time a lot which makes me want to keep reading more and more by him with the hopes of putting all the pieces of his story together. Overall, I highly recommend the book. It gives an honest look inside the cruelty of the Camorra.

Great read! The beginning of the book clearly explains the business model of the Italian mob and businessmen in Naples. (Shows how soft crime and business mesh.) The later portion of the the book shows the life style and cultural aspects of living in Naples and the "Life". Translated from Italian is a very very descriptive flowery way.

Even before reading this book, I read many of the reviews here on . I had also viewed the movie which I had bought in Italy. Because the movie is in dialect I had the option of being watched with Italian subtitles. In no way did watching the movie first diminish the impact of reading the book. At times it seemed to be written in a way intended just to deliver historical facts (hard, cold, even bloody facts) without a pretense of trying to be entertaining like a novel. In a way that treatment of the subject-a repeated description of horrific and grizzly acts-would almost seems to desensitize the reader and perhaps lower the 'shock value' of the everyday actions of Camorra members. But then perhaps the author is just mimicking the attitude of the Camorra itself, who in their false sense of justice and total disregard for human life outside their own system, will commit acts of murder so often and in such a way as to become desensitized to the brutality of it all. For them it is just another days work...For me the descriptions in this book also helped me understand in a small way how gangs in the US operate, from the recruitment of members to the elimination of rivals. I applaud Roberto Saviano for his work.

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