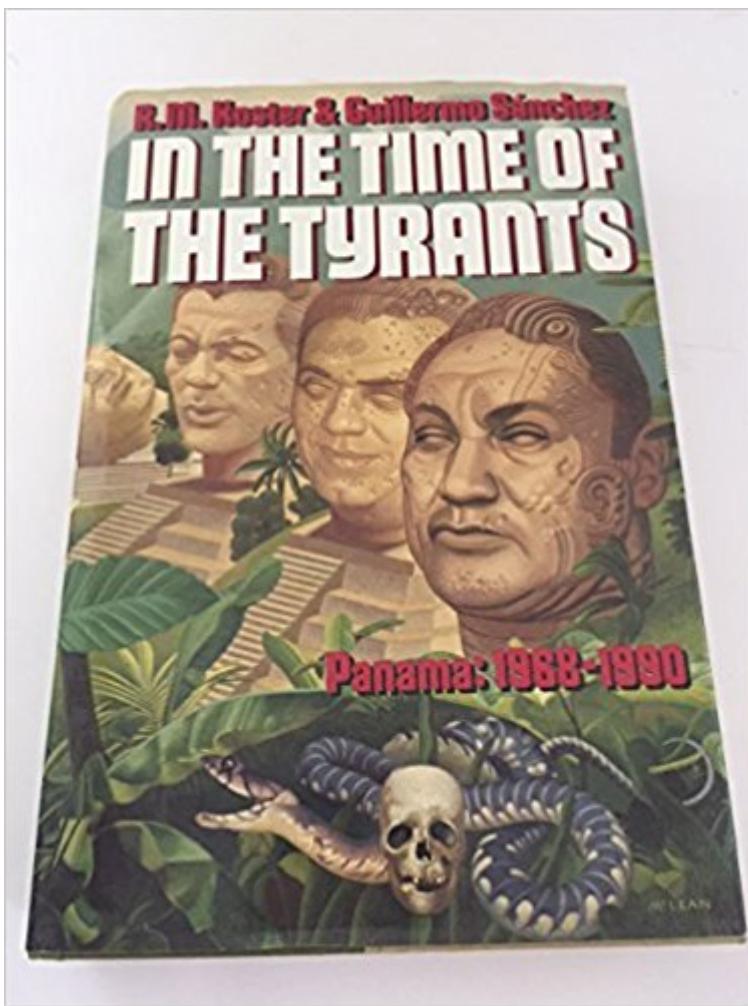


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# In The Time Of The Tyrants: Panama, 1968-1990



## **Synopsis**

An eyewitness account of how Panama, since 1968, has fallen victim to a line of military dictators who have fattened on the misery of a country once democratic and prosperous. The authors, an American novelist and a Panamanian journalist, were actors in the drama of Panama as well as observers. They tell the story of how the darkness fell on Panama, how the tyrants, from Omar Torrijos to Manuel Noriega, became creatures of the secret government of the United States, and were supported long after their true nature was known. It is the story of those tyrants killed, those they corrupted and those who were brave enough to stand up to them. Koster was also the author of "The Prince", "The Dissertation" and "Mandragon". --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## **Book Information**

Hardcover: 430 pages

Publisher: W W Norton & Co Inc; 1st edition (October 1990)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393026965

ISBN-13: 978-0393026962

Product Dimensions: 1 x 1 x 1 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #621,534 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #22 in Books > History > Americas > Central America > Panama #32763 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government

## **Customer Reviews**

This scathing indictment of U.S. Central American policy by an American novelist and a Panamanian journalist chronicles 21 years of misrule from the advent of Omar Torrijos to the fall of Manuel Noriega. In describing the power struggle following Torrijos's death in 1981, Koster and Sanchez charge that the Reagan administration helped Noriega, its "protege and accomplice," steal the '84 election, and they scoff at George Bush's claim to have been unaware of Noriega's involvement in drug traffic. The book deals primarily with the crimes and cruelties of Torrijos ("a tyrant, murderer, and thief") and Noriega ("an entirely untrustworthy, totally amoral, sadomasochistic sociopath"), and reveals how the U.S. "midwifed" the Panamanian dictatorship into existence in '68, supported it materially and morally in its various permutations, then cut out the very cancer it had

created in last year's military intervention. A credible, informative report, it is, however, studded with angry charges not supported with documentation, for example, that Bush, when vice-president, shared a metaphorical bed with the dopers. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Researched and written several years before the downfall of Manuel Noriega, this book is a powerful indictment of U.S. policy in Panama. The authors (Koster is an American novelist and Borbon is an exiled Panamanian journalist) concentrate on the conflict between "visible" U.S. government policies and the "invisible" arrangements set in place by the CIA. The most effective sections of the book are the inside accounts of the abuses of power by Omar Torrijos and the brutality of Noriega's regime. Koster was an eyewitness to the U.S. invasion of Panama in December 1989, and he contributes an appropriate concluding chapter to the saga. Panama's descent into tyranny does not make for easy reading, but this is an extremely important book for any serious student of American foreign policy. Some of the authors' specific claims may be conjecture, yet the overall effect of the book is chilling and thought-provoking. For academic and public libraries.- Thomas A. Karel, Franklin & Marshall Coll. Lib., Lancaster, Pa. Copyright 1990 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I am biased towards this book. My father wrote it and I lived through some the events or observed while living abroad. This is required reading to understand American foreign policy in Latin America, Panama today, and the dynamics of military governments. Give it a try. You won't be disappointed.

great read

I found a copy of the Time for Tyrants in Panama in 1999, and read it in total fascination. I had my own background having visited the country periodically since the period of Torrijos in the 70s, and was a frequent visitor in the period 1986 to 1989, while my firm was trying to complete a contract there. The book provides a no holds barred detailed account of how the systematic corruption developed under Torrijos and how the torch or key to the cash box was passed to Noriega. The book records the initial visits by Torrijos to Sweden in the 70s related to major power projects which started the cash flowing, and thereby established the rewards for those that controlled the government. Torrijos and then Noriega set up and maintained the system of total control by non elected individuals. An important element of this book by Koster and Sanchez is their description of how the US government supported the various tyrants as part of their Canal policy throughout this

period until the last year or so of Noriega's reign. During the last two years of Noriega up to the American invasion the book details the murder, torture, kidnapping and destruction of democracy that were directly orchestrated by Noriega, and the failure of the half hearted attempts by the US government to control or remove him. As the book recounts, the last two terrible years of Noriega were not necessary. The US government could have dealt with the problem earlier, and avoided the misery that fell on Panama. During my visits through 1988-1989 I was witness to the abuse of Noriega's "dobermans", and the resistance, especially from the white collar segment of the population. Panama was a seriously dangerous place for everyone at that time. Koster and Sanchez also imply that there is a culture in Panama that made this saga possible. That Martin Torrijos (son of Omar) could be a credible and nearly successful candidate for President in the 1999 elections illustrates this message only too well.

This book is certainly one of the most comprehensive on Panamanian history. Within its pages are a treasure trove of historical information on Panama's past history and the author put forth an great amount of effort in his reasearching of available information for this book. Mr. Koster left out a very important event, perhaps by accident, seeing as he was unaware, that in 1979, Panama was invaded by an armed force of Americans, who had planned to overthrow the late General Omar Torrijos and assassinate his military intelligence chief (Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Noriega). I should know, I was one of those involved in this effort and I have written a book ("Panama-Echoes From A Revolution"), which tells all about this long forgotten piece of Panamanian history. My book certainly adds this historically important part to Mr. Koster's great work.

An insightful view of a little known aspect of a period still affecting our culture.

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