



# Rain Dogs

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## **Rain Dogs** Baron R. Birtcher

The year is 1976, and the first shots are being fired in the narcotics and human-trafficking war that is still being waged today. Colt Freeman and his partner, known only as Snyder, want only to preserve their small piece of the marijuana trade. This modern-day Butch & Sundance ply their trade with proficiency and stealth. And, when necessary, deadly force.

Hundreds of miles away, along the border between the US and Mexico, a law-enforcement task-force patrols the desolate no-man's land that separates misery and prosperity, seeking to curb the unspeakable violence that feeds off the ever-growing river of humanity who find themselves at the mercy of the ruthless coyotes they have employed to guide them on their desperate crossing. Some distance further southwest, an elegant hacienda is nested behind the protective walls of an isolated ranch on the coast of the Sea of Cortez. Beyond those well-guarded gates, Miguel Zamora has placed himself at the center of a powerful circle of corrupt Mexican officials on the cusp of establishing ties with the Colombian cartels. Driven by avarice and steeped in paranoia, Miguel begins to seize control of his world with a singular and savage brutality that threatens to unleash a firestorm of bloodshed on both sides of the border.

Snyder and Colt decide to cash in on one last harvest, one final run down the coast before leaving their outlaw lives behind.

But when their meticulously-planned scheme comes undone, it forces them into a rash and hazardous escape from the law and directly into the crossfire of an internecine narcotics war that no one had seen coming.

## **Rain Dogs Details**

Date : Published August 2013 by Permanent Press

ISBN : 9781579623180

Author : Baron R. Birtcher

Format : Hardcover 320 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Adult

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# From Reader Review Rain Dogs for online ebook

## Sheila says

Washed out from their homes by sudden storms, the rain dogs on the high ground of Mexico don't know their way home. They prowl and turn their violence where it will. Meanwhile the various protagonists of Baron R. Birtcher's *Rain Dogs* have met their own storms in the beginning of America's drug wars. From Vietnam vet growing pot in Northern California, to crooked cop on the border, to Mexican drug lord giving way to addiction as he samples the Columbian product, all are losing what kept them safe, and violence looms.

*Rain Dogs* is a thriller with genuine shocks and chills. It's a violent novel, but convincingly, not gratuitously so, with flawed characters whose missteps and mistakes hide a wealth of conflicting emotions. The author combines first and third person narratives to great effect, creating a convincing narrator whose future remains unpredictable right up to the final pages, and a cast of powerful side-characters with all their well-formed, well-imagined motivations for good or ill. A combination of gritty realism and lyrically descriptive prose draws the reader in, bringing dry plains and misty forests to vivid life, with all the terrors lurking there. The danger's plausible and palpable. But an anchor of humanity remains, a hint of mystery, and a hope that at least some rain dogs might find shelter before the whole world falls apart.

I don't know what America, Mexico or Columbia were like in the 70s, but Baron R. Birtcher creates a very believable recent past and peoples it with characters of honor, dishonor, determination and grit, in a novel that keeps the reader enthralled and uncertain from beginning to end.

Disclosure: I received a free bound galley of this novel from the publisher with a request for my honest review.

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## John says

I did not like it, a bit out of my norm, and not something I would recommend to others.

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## Eric says

*Rain Dogs* is a story about three main characters during the war on drugs in the mid 1970's. I listened to the audio book and narration is well done. One of my favorite narrators, Ray Porter, is particularly well suited for these types of stories.

The story starts off with a former pot grower/dealer recalling his experience in the war on drugs. Then the story branches off into several POV's although it mainly focuses on three main characters. One of these characters is a Border Patrol officer (actually two officers) who gets kickbacks from a Mexican drug lord to allow pot and illegal immigrants across the border into the U.S. The third major character is the Mexican drug lord who is addicted to heroin and hungry for more power.

According to the pot dealer, things were going along just fine with him growing pot in Northern California and supplementing his off season supply with Mexican weed. Then the Columbians ruin the whole enterprise by wanting to smuggle heroin into the U.S. through Mexico. This turn of events ratchets up the violence up to a whole another level. The potential profits are also much greater.

The book provides an interesting look into the corruption and problems of running an illicit drug business from multiple perspectives. Also, how the characters react when situations get out of control and survival becomes the number one priority. The descriptions of people, places and things of the 70's paints a vivid picture transporting me into the story. The dialog has plenty colorful exchanges that keeps plot and story moving crisply along. Perhaps a weakness in the story is how the story is constructed. The multiple plot lines leaves the reader wondering where the story going and how all the parts are going to come together. They do eventually come together with a strong finish.

I found the story interesting and engaging for an overall good reading experience.

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### **David Marshall says**

This is a very taut and exciting thriller dealing with the shades of amorality as a drug dealer and corrupt cop struggle to survive.

<http://opionator.wordpress.com/2013/0...>

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### **Jo says**

Drug wars through the eyes of dirty cops, smugglers, and victims.

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### **Paul says**

Although comparisons will be made to both of Don Winslow's books Savages and The Power of the Dog do not miss reading this book. The author takes the reader on one heck of a wild ride in Rain Dogs as he envisions how the Mexicans and Colombians became partners in smuggling cocaine into the United States, while at the same time driving the California Pot growers out of business. This was a fantastic book, that the reader will not want to finnish. Yes it is that good!

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### **Aaron Spiegel says**

Interesting, could almost be called historical fiction

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### **Donna says**

2 stars. It wasn't completely awful.

One star gets added because occasionally I liked the author's use of words. He had a few great descriptive strokes.

But there was so much I didn't like about this. There was hardly any character development. The characters were all kind of shallow and stereotypical. I also didn't care for the plot construction. The author used a lot of time explaining situations instead of letting the characters lay them out.

The one thing that I found the most irksome, was the 'cool guy swagger' in almost every character. They seemed so similar. There was a slight variation. Instead of the ole 'cool guy swagger', there was also the 'clueless cool guy swagger'. Twice, someone says, "Well, if you're gonna be raped, you might as well enjoy the sex." The dialog wasn't a strong suit in this book.

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### **Darcia Helle says**

Not many books are set in the seventies and, having been a teenager then, I was especially excited to read this book. I looked forward to flashing back to the music, language, and culture, as well as seeing the turmoil of the period from a new perspective. This book did offer that, to some degree at least.

My biggest problem was the lack of character development. There are a lot of characters, most with point of view parts. The POV switches frequently, sometimes within a paragraph. This felt jarring, and never allowed me to stay with a character long enough to learn anything substantial about who he or she was. Many of them felt more like caricatures of the typical drug dealers of that period. I didn't get the sense of them as real people, with lives extending beyond their drug deals.

The plot is interesting, capturing both the drug war and the struggle of the poor Mexicans trying to cross over into the U.S. Despite what should have been heart thumping suspense at times, I never felt involved enough to care.

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### **Rand says**

Read this one in one night & was genuinely surprised by the consistent quality overall here as I am dubious of "suspense" books in general.

The language was descriptive without being showy and the three separate plot strands moved along at a quick clip.

But there were some singularly great lines in here (eg "A man does not live without having the map of his life written somewhere on his face.") and a few moments of outright hilarity.

& in case you are curious as I was, there are no Tom Waits allusions here—rather, the title refers to a Mexican legend about wild dogs who materialize after a rain storm. Dogs seem to be a *recurring* metaphor for the characters in this novel.

I got goosebumps as soon as I finished it.

TRIGGER WARNING: *do not read this book if you are at all sensitive to depictions of extreme violence, especially of a sexual nature. There are not many, but there are a few parts that are QUITE graphic.* I can understand WHY the author included those parts as they are integral to the plot, but there are some readers who might not be able to stomach certain scenes. Which is a shame, since this is really a GREAT read.

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### **Gloria Feit says**

The year was 1976. The nation was celebrating the end of the War of Independence. But in California, it was the beginning of a different kind of war as the Colombian cartels were flooding the state with cocaine and fighting for control of the market. The relatively quiet days of mom-and-pop type marijuana growers and recreational smoking was coming to an end.

The story is summarized in the lives of various participants: Steve Devlin and Sonny Limon, two “dirty” border guards on the payroll of a Mexican, El Rey Zamora, a cruel drug lord; and Colt Freeland and his colleague, who grew weed in the mountainous area of Humboldt County. Their lives somehow intertwined and the story is told in the first person by Colt’s partner.

It is an intriguing story, filled with violence and, in some cases, redemption; in other cases, poetic justice. But in any event, the flood of drugs began and continues to this day. The language is in keeping with the characters. The only criticism that can be made revolves around the portrayal of the various participants, who seem wooden and in need of more depth. However, the story works, and is recommended.

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### **Amy says**

A violent and riveting thriller about the drug wars in the 1970s from the marijuana fields of Humboldt County to seedy Tijuana. In Northern California, two Vietnam veterans struggle to protect their marijuana plots as people start encroaching on supplies and arming themselves with military-grade weaponry. Meanwhile in Mexico, the vicious Miguel Zamora begins to build ties with Colombia cartels to expand his drug business into the more lucrative and dangerous cocaine. Straddling the two territories are a couple of crooked cops smuggling drugs and skimming profits. Combining vivid scenes [“*The sweet smell of conifers and wild cascara mingled with the scent of coming rain. The pine canopy was alive with the clatter of redwings and scrub jay as I closed my eyes and turned my face to the dimming blush of the sun.*”], unsympathetic characters [“*Fatigue wracked his body and his eyeballs danced with anxiety behind closed lids; he was unable to find any semblance of solace or justification for his complicity in a scheme that had suddenly run wildly out of control.*”] and graphic descriptions, Birtcher catapults readers to the center of the action.

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### **James Thane says**

This is an excellent thriller set in the early days of the "War on Drugs." It's the Bicentennial year of 1976, and the cocaine epidemic that would soon sweep over the U.S. is looming just over the horizon. For the

moment, at least, the drug business here is still a relatively laid-back industry, dominated by relatively small-timers most of whom are growing and selling pot.

The narrator, who remains unnamed for a good long time, is a Vietnam vet. He and his partner, Colt Freeman, have a small marijuana patch in northern California and have been making a comfortable living for several years. But they now face increased scrutiny from the law and worse, violent elements, tied to the Columbian drug cartels, are moving into the area, attempting to take over the marijuana business by force. Colt and his partner see the handwriting on the wall and are anxious to get in one last crop before closing up shop. But that will prove to be much easier said than done.

Far to the south, on the Mexican/California border, a couple of bent border patrol cops are in league with a Mexican drug kingpin who's been moving illegal aliens across the border. But the drug lord is now moving into cocaine, and he's anxious to begin shipping large amounts into the U.S. along with the illegals.

The drug lord, Miguel Zamora, is the local "King" of a small rural area that he dominates like a feudal lord. He holds his subjects in complete subservience and in partnership with corrupt Mexican government officials, he has opened business with the Columbians to move white powder through Mexico and into the U.S.

But Zamora has become a little too enamored of his own product and is becoming increasingly unstable. This poses problems for his partners, for his "subjects" and for his aristocratic wife who, in effect, has become his hostage.

Much of the book moves along parallel tracks, moving back and forth between the developments in northern California and those along the border and in Mexico, until both threads of the story converge in a brilliant climax. This is a great and often violent story with lots of interesting and well-drawn characters, and it's virtually guaranteed to hold your interest from the first page to the very last.

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## **Cristobal says**

Not one person worth rooting for in the entire story.

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## **Jeff says**

\*\*\*WON VIA GOODREADS GIVEAWAYS\*\*\*

This book is presented as two or three separate stories that eventually intersect. While most of us are familiar with the "War on Drugs," this book does a great job of detailing the personal burdens and ultimate consequences of involvement in the drug business.

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