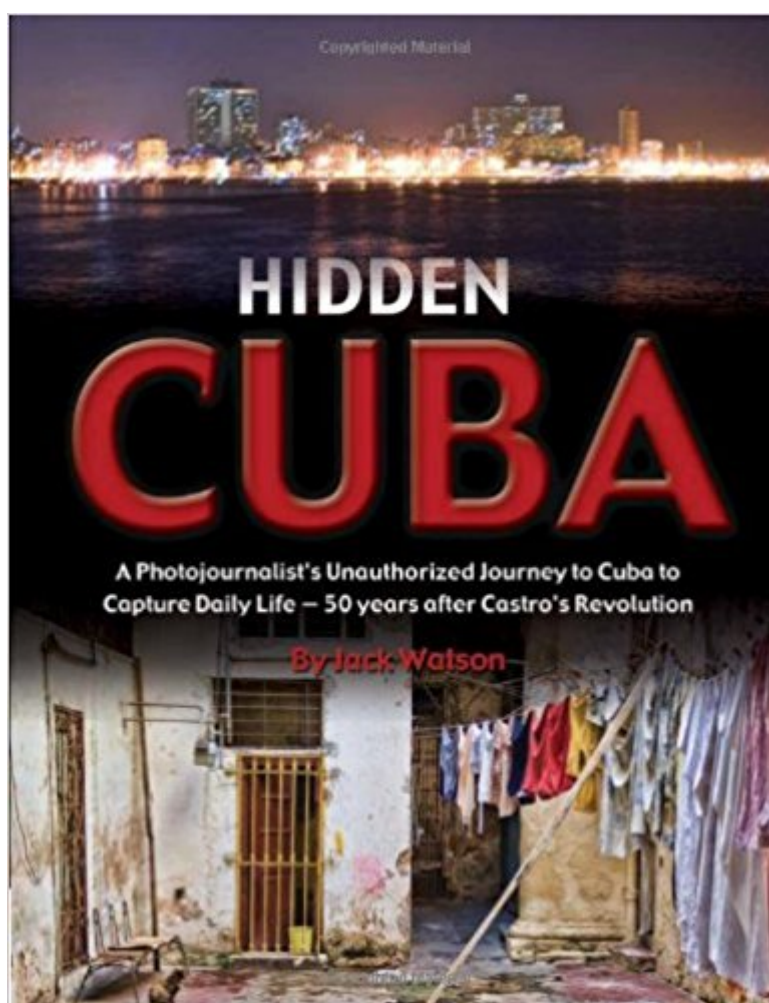


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Hidden Cuba: A Photojournalist's Unauthorized Journey To Cuba To Capture Daily Life: 50 Years After Castro's Revolution



Synopsis

Renowned American photographer Jack Watson traveled to Cuba on a legal humanitarian visa. He chronicled his journey with breathtaking, and often heartbreaking, images of the Cuban people, cities, and countryside. Watson describes his visit: "I had stepped back in time 50 years" this was my first impression of Cuba. My journey, which began in Havana, consisted of traveling by bus, pedicab, coco cab, 1957 Chevy, and foot. I was here primarily to help the Cuban people, but giving away medicine, vitamins, and money felt like using aspirin to treat the plague. I covered hundreds of miles, traveling in an oval-shaped route with stops at Cienfuegos, the Bay of Pigs, Trinidad, and Varadero Beach in the province of Matanzas and then back to Havana. As the title of this book indicates, this is an unauthorized journal of photographs taken during my visit. While I certainly share similar and compassionate thoughts about humanitarian aid toward people in need, I felt a greater calling in compiling the images for this book. If one picture is indeed worth thousands of words, then this is an encyclopedic portrayal of the real, hidden Cuba. This is not a travel guide; I'll leave that for the tourism industry. It is, however, a behind-the-scenes look at the Cuba that tourists never see. I have tried to present a wide portrayal of images that will allow the viewer to see all aspects of Castro's Cuba. You cannot look at the glitz alone and make logical conclusions about this country; while there is some beauty, there is more decay. While the country is admittedly a communist enclave, when looking at these images, one has to ask if this form of government was the right choice for the Cuban people. You be the judge the story is in your hands.

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Customer Reviews

Gold Medal Winner 2011 Florida Publishers Association President's Award --Florida Publishers Association

Jack Watson is a critically acclaimed author, photographer, producer, and film maker. He is a retired international airline Captain with over 30,000 hours flight time, 40-plus years aviation experience, and qualification in over one hundred aircraft. Tapping into his almost encyclopedic knowledge of aviation, Watson's latest novel DRONE WARRIOR is a high-flying military-techno-thriller. The 100,000-word action-filled, page-turning literary roller coaster ride is the first in a three book series and introduces key characters for the trilogy including drone prodigy James Barlow. In addition to Watson's writing talents he has over 30 years experience in the visual arts. His books, photos, short stories and columns have been viewed and read world wide. His works have also appeared in such publications as Playboy.com, Flight, Plane and Pilot, Sport Aviation, Trade-a-Plane, Movie Maker Magazine, Guitar World Magazine, to name a few.

Watson is a hardworking professional with a reputation well earned as a dedicated documentary photographer. Unfortunately, this publication is a mishmash of mixed quality images, poorly edited and presented, looking more like a collection of photos thrown on the floor, picked up with no particular organization or purpose and jammed awkwardly between the covers. Watson deserved better. Nevertheless, it always remains the photographer's responsibility to ensure that any published images -- and particularly a book with his name on it -- represents his very best. This

book does not; Watson dropped the ball. This book desperately needed a good editor, layout out and copy critique, and elimination of images that simply do not measure up. While many images are worthy of publication, others are more like tourist snapshots. Most disappointing however, is the conclusion that Watson has no vision to share. Perhaps one trip was insufficient for Watson to develop a sense of Cuba and the Cubans. It is altogether possible that he was simply overwhelmed, as many people are, by the sheer pervasiveness of iconic images in a place that was lost in time. Cuba is full of good, even spectacular scenes in the viewfinder; the seductiveness of photographing everything and thinking each image is worthy of publication is deadly.. Each image must stand on its own as a great image, but it must also contribute to the overall vision the photographer wishes to convey. There must be a theme -- a story -- and all images must serve and enhance that theme. Here Watson utterly fails. For the want of an editor, the book was lost. .

This is an intimate story of one person's experiences as they travel in Cuba. It is well written, observes things carefully, and expresses them in a very real fashion. Unpretentious, open, and very human. I've traveled a lot in Cuba and this book tells it like it is.

Arrived in great condition. Thank you

Excellent photo journey!

A a Cuban descendant I have always been interested in learning more about the people and life in Cuba, before and after Castro. Because of this I enjoy photos very much as they provide a true image of the country. This particular book has nice photos, but too much effort was placed in electronically editing them. Hence, the sense of reality is lost. It would have been better to keep them as natural as possible. I have to add that the best photos are the ones without comments from the author. I got the feeling that he was judging and being sarcastic. I really disliked it. My recommendation to Mr. Jack Watson, take a lot of photos, do not edit them and keep any comments to yourself.

I was terrible dissappointed by this book. I, actually, thought of sending it back. I was not a big fan of his grainy black and whites.

Jack Watson is an amazingly visionary and articulate photographer. I recall the first time I was

privileged to view the works of Timothy O'Sullivan. The feeling was intensely the same while viewing this wonderful contribution to photography by Jack Watson. If you value photographically captured genuineness, raw emotion, magnificence in human spirit, and grandeur of people and their environment, I believe you will agree that this photo journal will be a prized possession. Mister Watson has demonstrated in a collection of insightful photographs a rarity in creative thinking and composition. Rarity also applies to his gifted ability to capture the essence of the Cuban people and their social and cultural condition. "Life" in these incredibly haunting photographs is certainly evident and a special present to the viewer. Indeed, the entire book is a portrait of reality, and I am proud to own a copy.

I don't know much about Cuba aside from what is presented in the media. I don't even speak Spanish. I've watched several Hollywood movies and a couple of documentaries specifically about Cuba and some on Kennedy that touch on the subject. What I quickly realized when I opened this book was how little of the real story is known. I got the book only a couple of hours ago and I went through it cover to cover. I just couldn't stop looking at it. For anyone who is interested in culture and history, this book will be a compelling eye-opener. In the first few pages, I ran across a photo of two children kneeling in a church. The photo is askew on the page as if to indicate that something isn't quite right. It all becomes obvious as you continue. Even if you do not have a great interest in history or culture, this book gives a look at a lifestyle that is sure to foster a great deal of appreciation for how we live here in the U.S. --all issues considered. I read some, but I get a lot from photos, and this book really speaks to you. I was amused, enlightened, and above all, quite moved. It is a place stuck in time with a people of unstoppable drive. How frustrating it must be to have ambition in this environment. I should add that I am a people watcher myself and I find that seeing people live there lives, even in photos can often say more than words. So, with that, I would like to take a moment in this open forum to thank Jack Watson for providing this unique insight into a social experiment that I might otherwise never have known. These kinds of works are important for more reasons than I can list here. This book has made me care about the people of Cuba and the hardships they endure. Quality of life is paramount to my own existence and I am always sad when I find that people are forced to live a way that is otherwise not what they would choose.

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