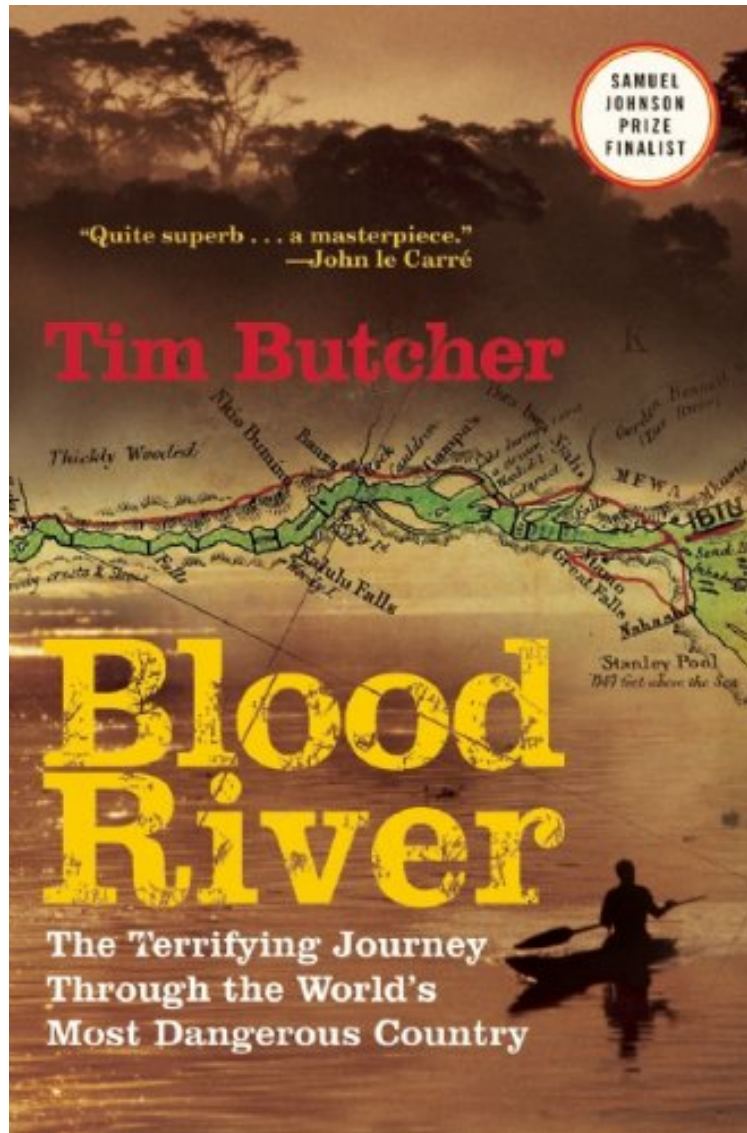


[Download] Blood River: The Terrifying Journey Through The World's Most Dangerous Country

# Blood River: The Terrifying Journey Through The World's Most Dangerous Country

Tim Butcher

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**Tim Butcher : Blood River: The Terrifying Journey Through The World's Most Dangerous Country** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Blood River: The Terrifying Journey Through The World's Most Dangerous Country:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating travel journey and summary of literature about the Congo By James Bertini Without the publication of this fascinating account of one man's arduous journey across a

continent and through a forgotten country, the world would be worse off. The author weaves together historical accounts of the few who preceded him: Henry Stanley ("Dr. Livingstone, I presume."), Robert Conrad (Heart of Darkness), Evelyn Waugh, Graham Greene, and Barbara Kingsolver (The Poisonwood Bible). This makes the book much more than just a travel report but also a bibliography as wide and as deep as the mighty Congo River. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Unbelievable journey, Unforgettable encounters By Customer This was a gripping story of a dangerous journey through almost unbelievably primitive conditions. Much of what he related about his encounters was almost unbelievable to read about in the 21st C. I've traveled to third world and developing world, and have seen the incongruity of people on oxcarts with cell-phones etc. as they progress unevenly--but progress they do! But there is none of that on his journey. No sign of the 21st C, and almost none of the 20th C remaining in the area he traveled through. It broke my heart to realize how the world has ignored and forgotten the suffering DRC people. Mr. Butcher is a very interesting writer, and I appreciated the regional history as well as the story of his own tribulations and perseverance (although at times I thought he was just plain crazy to continue!). I would have given this book a "5 star" but the end of the book just petered out, so the end was a bit of a disappointment. Nonetheless, highly recommended! 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Engrossing, thoroughly realist look at Africa By N. Anderson I just finished reading both this and Jeffrey Tayler's Facing the Congo: A Modern-Day Journey into the Heart of Darkness, which describes a similar journey. The two books are quite different in their approaches to the material, but they lend themselves to comparison, and on the whole, this book, Blood River, comes out ahead. The premise of this work is simple. The author, at the time the Africa correspondent for the Daily Telegraph, decides to retrace the journey of the most famous Daily Telegraph correspondent of a previous era: Henry Morton Stanley. He prepares for this trip for years, reading extensively about Stanley, the Congo, and Africa in general before starting his remarkable trip. After first flying to the shores of Lake Tanganyika, he follows, using mostly modern conveyances, the route pioneered over a century before by Stanley. Throughout he compares his experiences with those of the prior explorer, and with the experiences of only a few decades ago, at the time of the Belgian colony. I was amazed to learn how developed the Congo had been prior to its independence. A modern joke, which does not feature in this book, but which applies completely goes as follows: a child asks his grandparent "what did you use for light before candles were invented?" and the grandparent replies "Electricity." The constant refrain of this book is the elderly, 70+ year old crowd, who remember clean water, good roads, good hospitals, the rule of law, and electric light, while their grandchildren work as subsistence farmers or mercenaries. Butcher writes as a journalist, and it shows. His ability to bring even a savage and dangerous "undeveloping" country to vivid, engrossing light is superb. His research before the trip shows as well, in his asides about flora, fauna, and the monuments he discovers. His point in making the trip was a deeper understanding of the country, and this is where the starkest contrast is seen between his work and Tayler's. Tayler states at the opening of his book that the journey was one of self discovery, and that book is much more inward focused and solipsistic. It is surprising then, that I feel the reader gets a better picture of Butcher than of Tayler, as we see his interest in, and concern for, the people he encounters. His closing paragraphs add a note of hope to an otherwise bleak look at the "broken heart of Africa". Which is a wonderfully coined phrase, by the way. The book is written in British English, with an occasional word I had to look up as an American reader. (I had never heard the term "tatty" before reading this). Occasionally he repeats himself, with some key phrases repeated more than once. Butcher describes Mobutu's "singlehanded" prevention of Congo's success on at least three occasions, using very similar wording. But these are relatively minor quibbles with an otherwise excellent work. Highly recommended.

Published to rave reviews in the United Kingdom and named a Richard Judy Book Club selection the only work of nonfiction on the 2008 list Blood River is the harrowing and audacious story of Tim Butcher's journey in the Congo and his retracing of legendary explorer H. M. Stanley's famous 1874 expedition in which he mapped the Congo River. When Daily Telegraph correspondent Tim Butcher was sent to Africa in 2000 he quickly became obsessed with the legendary Congo River and the idea of recreating Stanley's journey along the three-thousand-mile waterway. Despite warnings that his plan was suicidal, Butcher set out for the Congo's eastern border with just a backpack and a few thousand dollars hidden in his boots. Making his way in an assortment of vehicles, including a motorbike and a dugout canoe, helped along by a cast of characters from UN aid workers to a pygmy rights advocate, he followed in the footsteps of the great Victorian adventurer. An utterly absorbing narrative that chronicles Butcher's forty-four-day journey along the Congo River, Blood River is an unforgettable story of exploration and survival.

From Publishers Weekly For me terror manifests itself through clear physical symptoms, an ache that grows behind my knees and a choking dryness in my throat, writes British journalist Butcher in the preface of this devastating yet strangely exhilarating account of his six-week ordeal retracing the steps of 19th-century explorer H.M. Stanley's Victorian-era travels through the present-day hell that is the Republic of Congo. Setting out into the war-torn, disease-infested backcountry of Congo in 2000 against the wishes of just about everyone in his life family, friends, editors and a wild assortment of government officials (the corrupt and the more corrupt) Butcher quickly finds more horror than

he'd previously experienced in his 10 years as a war correspondent (With my own eyes I had peered into a hidden African world where human bones too numerous to bury were left lying on the ground). His tale is chock-a-block with gruesome details about the brutal Belgian rule of the late 19th century as well as the casual disregard for life on the contemporary scene. Part travelogue, part straight-forward reportage, Butcher's story is a full-throated lament for large-scale human potential wasted with no reasonable end in sight. (Oct.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

From Booklist A journalist for the UK's Daily Telegraph, Butcher undertook a hazardous African trip in 2004, traveling from Lake Tanganyika to the Atlantic Ocean via the Congo River. And he did not travel via foreigners' usual conveyance in Africa—aircraft—but overland by motorbike, dugout canoe, and UN patrol boat. This account of his six-week-long journey proves to be an exceptionally gripping example of travel writing, not only because of its roster of obstacles surmounted by the resourceful traveler but also because of its empathy for those who assisted Butcher in passing through the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Encountering ordinary Congolese, staff of the UN and humanitarian agencies, and elderly holdovers from the Belgian colonial era, Butcher catches their life stories as he recounts the historical waypoints (such as Henry Stanley's 1874-77 exploration, whose route Butcher followed) in Congo's connection to and postcolonial detachment from the modern world, symbolized in dilapidated sights such as crumbling post offices and hulks of river boats. Depicting the country's dire physical plight and lawless corruption, Butcher delivers an unblinking firsthand portrait of contemporary Congo. --Gilbert Taylor A New York Times Bestseller Quite superb . . . a masterpiece. John le Carr Less an adventure tale than a journalistic investigation of what has gone wrong in the Congo, and why . . . Butcher's breadth of knowledge is both impressive and eclectic. Washington Post Some travel is inspired, some courageous, some insane. And every now and then someone undertakes a trek that is all three, as happened when Butcher traveled the length of the Congo River . . . a gripping account of [Butcher's] perilous journey through the heart of Africa and its embattled people. Seattle Post-Intelligencer Devastating yet strangely exhilarating . . . [Butcher's] tale is chock-a-block with gruesome details about the brutal Belgian rule of the late 19th century as well as the casual disregard for life on the contemporary scene. Part travelogue, part straight-forward reportage, Butcher's story is a full-throated lament for large-scale human potential wasted with no reasonable end in sight. Publishers Weekly A somber, eye-opening journey into the definitive heart of darkness . . . a brilliant account of a broken land, one that certainly deserves the attention this excellent book brings. Kirkus sTim Butcher deserves a medal for this crazy feat. I marvel at his courage and his empathy with the unfortunate Congolese when he re-enacted Stanley's appalling journey across the continent. Thomas Pakenham, author of *The Scramble for Africa* This is a terrific book, an adventure story about a journey of great bravery in one of the world's most dangerous places. It keeps the heart beating and the attention fixed from beginning to end. Fergal Keane, author of *Season of Blood: A Rwandan Journey* It's a fine book, and I greatly enjoyed it. It's a story of the extraordinary courage, tenacity and endurance of two men: H.M. Stanley, and Tim Butcher, who wrote it. The DR Congo is one of the most dangerous and unpredictable countries on earth, and to have penetrated into the depths of its darkness and described it so fully is a great achievement. It even left me with more of an affection for Stanley than I have ever felt before. As for Butcher, I have nothing but admiration for him. John Simpson, author of *Simpson's World: Dispatches from the Front Line* A grim and gripping read. Christopher Hart, *Sunday Times* Gripping. *Esquire* From his adventure, [Butcher] has plundered a wealth of terrific stories and survived to recite a rosary of unrelenting horror. Nicholas Shakespeare, *The Telegraph* Butcher's 21st century eye gives a whole new slant on [Stanley's] African expedition. *Sunday Express* Both stirring and thought-provoking. Anthony Daniels, *Sunday Telegraph* What makes *Blood River* such a compelling read is the fact that the journey becomes an exercise in mental terror, the author skillfully conveying the exhaustion of six weeks on tenterhooks, wondering what might happen just around the next bend. Jim Blackburn, *Wanderlust* A remarkable travelogue of exquisite proportions . . . nothing short of a modern-day masterpiece. *Aesthetica Magazine* It throws light on a place that lives in such extreme darkness, most of us have lost sight of it completely. In doing so it reminds us that travel writing can still be exciting, uncompromising and politically relevant. Anthony Sattin, *Spectator* Butcher's account of his journey down the Blood River is terrific in every sense . . . It is an extraordinarily compelling book by a talented writer with something to say and I suspect that Conrad would have liked it very much indeed. *Geographical Magazine* A remarkable, fascinating book by a courageous and perceptive writer. One of the most exciting books to emerge from Africa in recent years. Alexander McCall Smith This is a terrific book, an adventure story about a journey of great bravery in one of the world's most dangerous places. Fergal Keane, author of *Season of Blood* An intrepid adventure. In making and describing this journey, Tim Butcher has followed in the footsteps of Stanley and Conrad. It takes a lot of guts to yomp through the Congo and he obviously has plenty of those. But it is the wit and passion of the writing that keeps you engrossed. Giles Foden, author of *The Last King of Scotland* The day of the solitary intrepid traveler is not over. Tim Butcher's extraordinary, audacious journey through the Congo is worthy of the great nineteenth-century explorers. Completely enthralling but also a thoughtful and sobering portrait of modern Africa. William Boyd, author of *Restless* Tim Butcher deserves a medal for this crazy feat. I marvel at his courage and his empathy with the unfortunate Congolese when he reenacted Stanley's appalling journey across the continent. Thomas Pakenham, author of *The Scramble For Africa* Tim Butcher has written a wonderful adventure story about one of the least known regions of modern Africa because it is among the most dangerous. *Blood River* represents a

remarkable marriage of travelogue and history, which deserves to make Tim Butcher a star for his prose, as well as his courage. Max Hastings, author of *Armageddon: The Battle For Germany*