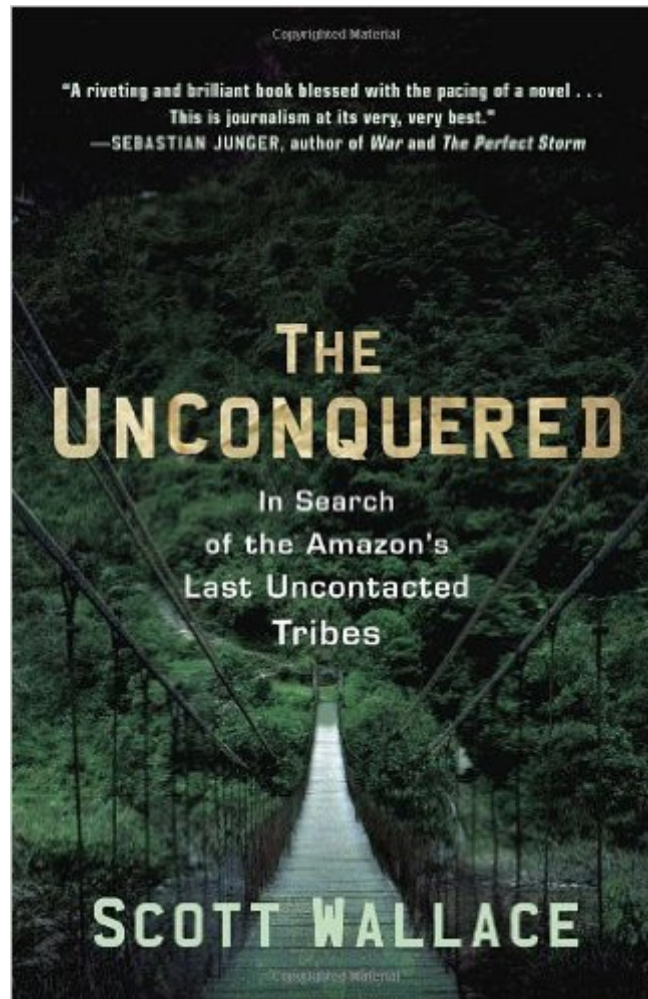


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The Unconquered: In Search Of The 's Last Uncontacted Tribes



Synopsis

THE UNCONQUERED TELLS THE EXTRAORDINARY TRUE STORY OF A JOURNEY INTO THE DEEPEST RECESSES OF THE TO TRACK ONE OF THE PLANET'S LAST UNCONTACTED INDIGENOUS TRIBES. Even today there remain tribes in the far reaches of the rainforest that have avoided contact with modern civilization. Deliberately hiding from the outside world, they are the unconquered, the last survivors of an ancient culture that predates the arrival of Columbus in the New World. In this gripping first-person account of adventure and survival, author Scott Wallace chronicles an expedition into the planet's uncharted depths, discovering the rainforest's secrets while moving ever closer to a possible encounter with one such tribe—the mysterious flecheiros, or the "People of the Arrow," seldom-glimpsed warriors known to repulse all intruders with showers of deadly arrows. On assignment for National Geographic, Wallace joins Brazilian explorer Sydney Possuelo at the head of a thirty-four-man team that ventures deep into the unknown in search of the tribe. Possuelo's mission is to protect the Arrow People. But the information he needs to do so can only be gleaned by entering a world of permanent twilight beneath the forest canopy. Danger lurks at every step as the expedition seeks out the Arrow People even while trying to avoid them. Along the way, Wallace uncovers clues as to who the Arrow People might be, how they have managed to endure as one of the last unconquered tribes, and why so much about them must remain shrouded in mystery if they are to survive. Laced with lessons from anthropology and the planet's own convulsed history, and boasting a Conradian cast of unforgettable characters—all driven by a passion to preserve the wild, but also wracked by fear, suspicion, and the desperate need to make it home alive—The Unconquered reveals this critical battleground in the fight to save the planet as it has rarely been seen, wrapped in a page-turning tale of adventure. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

Scott Wallace is a seasoned National Geographic journalist experienced in wars, revolutions, and the struggles of native tribes in the , the Arctic, and the Andes. "The Unconquered" tells of his 78-day journey in 2002 with Brazilian explorer and activist Sydney Possuelo working for the National Indian Foundation of Brazil (FUNAI) to establish the location of the uncontacted Flecheiros, the Arrow People, while NOT contacting them. The objective was to obtain information to protect these isolated, uncontacted native people from the encroachment of White Men and civilization, including diseases, illegal logging and gold mining, poaching and drug trafficking. The risk of contact also threatened the team in that the Flecheiros are known as skilled archers killing intruders with poison-tipped arrows. The team, led by Possuelo, contained 34 men, including Indians of the three tribes neighboring the Flecheiros and Brazilian frontiersmen. The Flecheiros' territory is a very remote area of Brazil, with no roads, only rivers and jungle. The explorers took motorboats as far as they could, then trekked through the jungle, covering 250 miles. They carried all their equipment through the jungle, some men with as much as 100 pounds on their backs, making trails with machetes. The isolation in the jungle was complete; the sky disappeared. If Wallace lost sight of the person before him, he immediately became lost. The dense canopy rendered useless the GPS, a two-way radio and the satellite phone. The explorers had no recourse in case of serious illness or injury; no medical personnel accompanied them.

This is a day by day, sometimes hour by hour documentary of a 3 month trek through the with brilliant, infamous, & controversial Sydney Possuelo and his crew - 34 men total. Possuelo invited National Geographic's journalist Scott Wallace and photographer Nicolas Reynard along to document the trip - both hand-picked because of their extensive experience working in the . Journalists and photographers were usually excluded on these trips but Possuelo sought world-wide media coverage for his cause. His stated purpose was to document on the ground the presence of isolated and uncontacted tribes and their villages as seen from the air - counteracting assertions of loggers and others who want to deny these tribes exist - landgrabs have been historically justified by the claim that no one was there. Possuelo also had several secondary purposes concerning monitoring of possible illegal activity in the reserve.*The official Brazilian

approach, championed by Possuelo, was to prevent contact with any of the 20-30 known isolated tribes - some 4,000 Indians - that thrive in the deepest parts of the . This approach also placed millions of acres out of reach from the logging, fishing, and gold-prospecting industries - and shutting out missionaries and anthropologists. Possuelo had a lot of enemies.*Possuelo's primary rationale for the no contact policy was the Indians' extreme vulnerability to contagious disease. Like the North American and South American Indians during the times of Columbus and other explorers, the indigenous populations simply had no resistance to the germs whites carried. Other reasons included the inevitable decline if not eradication of every tribe after contact, regardless of whether the contact was friendly or hostile.

Child-killing anacondas, ants that have pincers so strong they are used as a substitute for stitches in wounds, jaguars wanting a tasty snack, vampire bats - are these going to be smaller dangers than the Arrow People?I'm sorry to say that I would never have had the courage to attempt the expedition that National Geographic author Scott Wallace undertook when he joined Sydney Possuelo's attempt to find and protect, but not meet, "the last uncontacted tribes" of the . The hardships and dangers are almost unimaginable to me. And to the degree that I can imagine them, that is where I want them to stay - in my mind only.The basin is fascinating to me, perhaps because it is so different from my part of the world. Mr. Wallace did a great job of showing me the isolation of the country, the vulnerability of its inhabitants, both native and non-native, animal and human. Mr. Possuelo, an outspoken supporter of the indigenous tribes and critic of those who harm them, either intentionally or not, comes across as a bit of a Captain Queeg but even so, was not able to control the actions of some of his employees. Speaking of Possuelo's plans, the author writes "It was a grandiose vision, seeming to require an extraordinary combination of altruistic impulse and an ego of ian proportions."The author speaks of a caiman's "malicious smile," and while that seems anthropomorphic, I wouldn't blame the caiman if it were malicious. The cruelty to animals, often unnecessary even through the men needed to eat, was horrifying. "He worked his machete like a sushi chef, excising the upper and lower jaws. The mouthless fish continued to flip-flop around the bottom of the boat, as though powered by some demonic force that refused to die.

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