

[Free] Streets With No Names: A Journey into Central and South America

## Streets With No Names: A Journey into Central and South America

*Stryker McGuire*

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**Stryker McGuire : Streets With No Names: A Journey into Central and South America** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Streets With No Names: A Journey into Central and South America:

From Publishers WeeklyMcGuire took an extended leave from his job as a Newsweek senior editor and, accompanied by his girlfriend, drove through parts of Central and South America. In this disappointing memoir of that 1987-1988 trip he chats unrevealingly about the things he saw in Guatemala, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina and Mexico, tossing in a few refried beans of history from time to time. With the exception, perhaps, of his comments on Argentina, what McGuire has to say is singularly uninformative, unevocative and uninteresting. He tells us about the high standard of living in Costa Rica, for instance, and the tin mines of Bolivia; Mexico is "baffling, rich and appealing." In the chapter about Argentina he discusses the high percentage of psychotherapists in Buenos Aires and draws the obvious connection with the Dirty War that wound down in 1980. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc.From Library JournalIn the vein of Robert Harvey's Fire Down Below ( LJ 11/1/88), Newsweek writer McGuire's account is not so much a travel book as a composite of sketches that leave us with these

impressions: Guatemala--sham democracy with right-wing death squads rampantly active; Nicaragua--struggling futilely against U.S. incursions; Honduras and El Salvador--groveling uncritically for Washington's financial carrot; Costa Rica--democratic only because it lacked what others coveted; Ecuador--oil rich, economically poor; Peru--the guerrillas are gaining; Bolivia--tin mines with sick miners; Chile--democratic until a CIA plot brought the bloody Pinochet to power; Argentina--so traumatized by its war against dissidents that psychiatric professionals outnumber ours; and Mexico--pulled always by the North. Flashbacks confuse the reader at times, but McGuire is a skilled raconteur and presents a clear view of the area for the lay reader. For large public libraries only. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 11/15/90-- Louise Leonard, Univ. of Florida Libs., Gainesville Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus sFrom Newsweek's chief of correspondents, an engaging travelogue of lands from Mexico to Argentina, deftly weaving anecdotes, historical tales that rival the region's fantastical fiction, and ponderings over racial conflict, economic booms and busts, and political violence. As a reporter in Nicaragua during the 1979 revolution, McGuire wrote the hard news of war; here, to set the stage for his account of his 1987 return to Central and South America, he pours out absurd tales of that time: the drunken ramblings of doomed dictator Somoza as his handlers tried to pull him away from the reporter; the female who posed on Somoza's bed for press photos after his fall. McGuire's stories of his six-month drive south of the border in 1987 are equally vivid, and his portraits of the men and women he met manage to convey the essence of their homelands without stereotyping national characteristics. Juan Carlos, a "child philosopher" and absent-minded shoeshiner in Quito, Ecuador, wonderfully illustrates that land's endemic combination of street smarts and naiveté; a less-endearing immigrant innkeeper, who displays a portrait of her late husband in his Nazi uniform, provides an oddly sympathetic look at the need for economic stability in Chile. McGuire complains jovially about washed-out roadways and misleading maps, and warns fellow travelers to remove their cars' sideview mirrors when parking outside at night; but he is disheartened to see stoplights across the border into Chile, where he finds the atmosphere "spruced-up Orwellian." It's clear that McGuire's capital helped make these countries such enjoyable places to visit, but for anyone with the same resources, it sounds like a great trip. -- Copyright 1991, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.