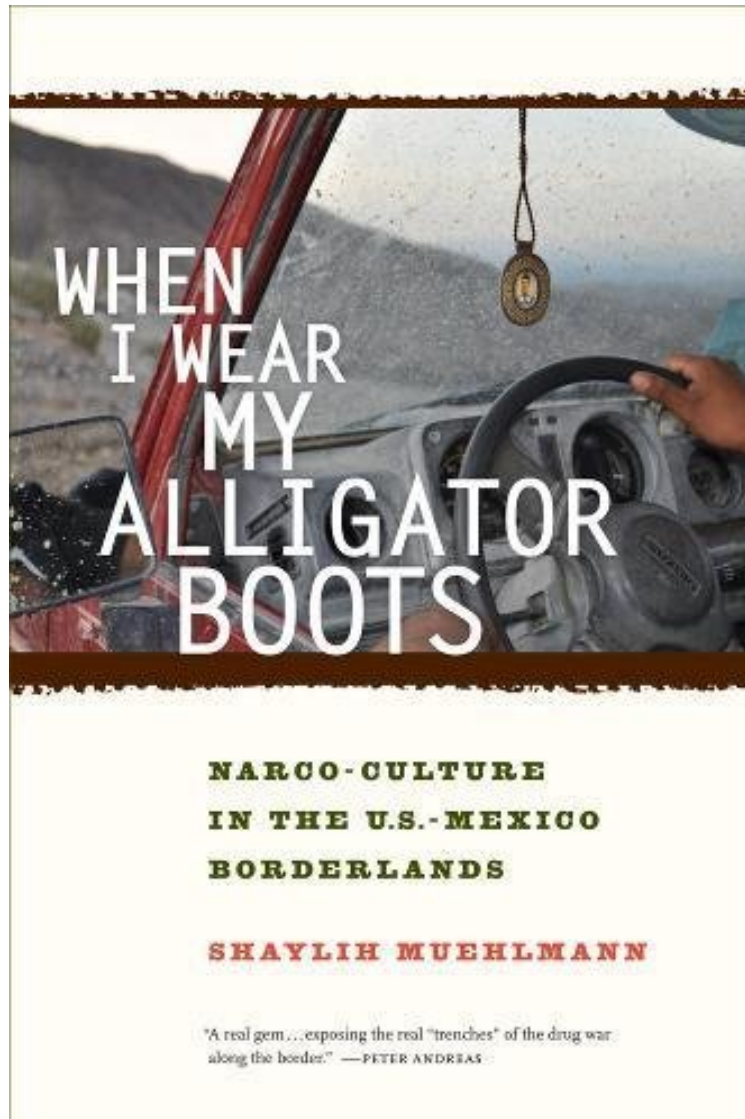


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When I Wear My Alligator Boots: Narco-Culture in the U.S. Mexico Borderlands (California Series in Public Anthropology)

Shaylih Muehlmann

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1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Excellent for TeachingBy L. BellFor those readers who may be debating this as a text to assign students, I want to write a brief endorsement. I use this book in an undergraduate course on the anthropology of the US and its Borders. I teach about five books, and consistently this is a student favourite. Muehlmann is a gifted story teller with an eye towards those small details that say so much of how life is lived. The book offers an insightful look at narco-trafficking without the sensationalism that occupies the media. The background information about US-Mexico relations is just the right amount to be thorough but not exhausting. An ideal teaching tool!1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Great informationBy JessicaI had to read this book for class at first I didn't think I would like it or be interested. To my surprise it was great. I love how she described the people and let you know the status of how they live.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. amazing look at the complexity involving the war on drugsBy Loves blendSheds light on how deeply the drug trade is woven into everyday life of the average Mexican family. Well written and once picked up, impossible to put down.

When I Wear My Alligator Boots examines how the lives of dispossessed men and women are affected by the rise of narco-trafficking along the U.S.-Mexico border. In particular, the book explores a crucial tension at the heart of the war on drugs: despite the violence and suffering brought on by drug cartels, for the rural poor in Mexico's north, narco-trafficking offers one of the few paths to upward mobility and is a powerful source of cultural meanings and local prestige. In the borderlands, traces of the drug trade are everywhere: from gang violence in cities to drug addiction in rural villages, from the vibrant folklore popularized in the narco-corridos of Norteña music to the icon of Jess Malverde, the patron saint of narcos, tucked beneath the shirts of local people. In *When I Wear My Alligator Boots*, the author explores the everyday reality of the drug trade by living alongside its low-level workers, who live at the edges of the violence generated by the militarization of the war on drugs. Rather than telling the story of the powerful cartel leaders, the book focuses on the women who occasionally make their sandwiches, the low-level businessmen who launder their money, the addicts who consume their products, the mules who carry their money and drugs across borders, and the men and women who serve out prison sentences when their bosses' operations go awry.

"When I Wear My Alligator Boots is captivating from beginning to end...difficult to put down." -- Victor Garcia, *American Anthropologist* (03/01/2015)"When I Wear My Alligator Boots is a vivid and perceptive ethnography... beautifully written" -- Josiah Heyman, *Canadian Journal of Latin American and Caribbean Studies* (01/19/2015)"Muehlmann has expertly woven together an exploration of the impact of the narco-economy on ordinary people...she adds to a small body of literature that provides deeply embedded, first-hand accounts of the Mexican narco-economy at the personal and community levels."-- James H. McDonald, *Journal of International and Global Studies* (11/01/2014)"When I Wear My Alligator Boots...provides a model of politically engaged anthropological research."-- Christine Kovic, *Anthropology Now* (12/01/2014)"Muehlmann has expertly woven together an exploration of the impact of the narco-economy on ordinary people...she adds to a small body of literature that provides deeply embedded, first-hand accounts of the Mexican narco-economy at the personal and community levels." -- Daniel E. Martinez, *Contemporary Sociology: a Journal of s* (09/01/2015)
From the Author This book is my second sole-authored work focusing on the lives of men and women living in northern Mexico. My first book "Where the River Ends" was published with Duke University Press and is also available on .
From the Inside Flap "This book is a rare gem. In contrast to today's often overheated and sensationalized accounts of "drug cartels" and "kingpins," Shaylih Muehlmann instead draws our attention to the too-often overlooked stories of the ordinary people at the margins of the drug economy in the U.S.-Mexico borderlands. Through fearless ethnographic research, she exposes the real "trenches" of the drug war along the border."
Peter Andreas, author of *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America* This is an outstanding book . . . deeply moving in parts and simply fascinating in others. It makes clear interventions, but in a language that a general readership would enjoy even as scholars will assign this book in their classes.
Alexander Dawson, author of *First World Dreams: Mexico Since 1989* This work provides an original and incredibly important contribution to a wide body of literature on the drug war, and particularly the escalation of drug war violence over the past decade.
Adrienne Pine, author of *Working Hard, Drinking Hard: On Violence and Survival in Honduras*