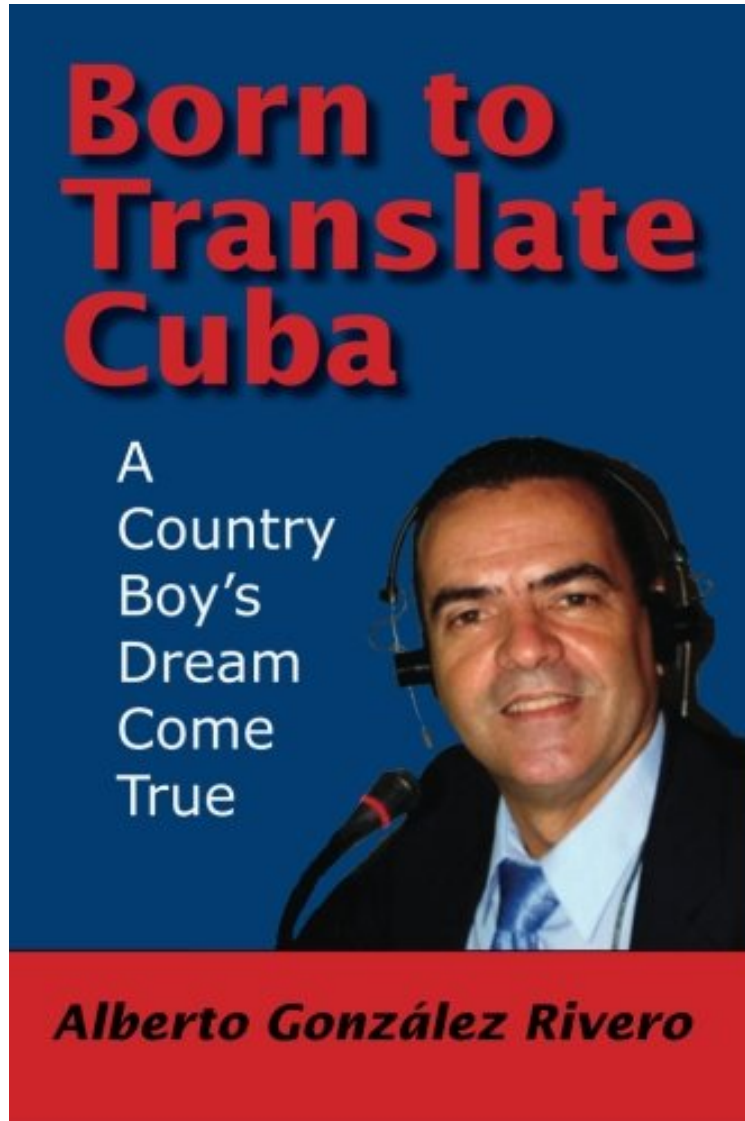


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Born to Translate Cuba: A Country Boy's Dream Come True

Alberto Gonzalez Rivero

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Alberto Gonzalez Rivero : Born to Translate Cuba: A Country Boy's Dream Come True before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Born to Translate Cuba: A Country Boy's Dream Come True:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An adventure story of the Cuban Revolution by one who is living it.By Judy RGonzalez Riveros Born to Translate Cuba contains in its title, ironically, one of the more important conditions of our time that Cuba needs to be translated for the rest of us. As the author references in his introduction, the real Cuba remains a somewhat ominous mystery to most Americans. And translate he does! He parallels the story

of his 50-year life with the 5 decades of the Cuban Revolution, each chapter presenting in 10-year bursts both his life experiences and the growing years of the great Cuban social experiment. The first chapter Cuba: a brief history reads like a fast-paced adventure story, which is of course true. As a true lover of the English language, Gonzalez Riveros words are carefully chosen, even poetic. He describes the anecdotes of his life in a painstakingly honest way, without self-delusion, revealing his fears and weaknesses alongside his humanity, good instincts, and dreams come true. And he is an accomplished storyteller. His humor, often offbeat, fills each tale. The book is a delight to read. We who are not Cubans are fortunate to have this wonderful history to read and enjoy. We are brought many steps closer to real understanding.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A LIFE INSIDE AN EVOLUTION= REVOLUTION

By Informed Opinion

Full disclosure: I have known Alberto for 25 years, since I am one of the many people who have been actively engaged in challenging the US public to revisit US-Cuba policy, and resume diplomatic relations so that US citizens will have the restoration of their own human right of freedom to travel, and we can have a mechanism to begin to restore and rebuild bilateral relations. So, many of the events Alberto relates I have shared or witnessed; the death of his mother, his marriage, birth of his children, and his evolution as a translator. He translates for me when I am in Cuba since I am not a Spanish speaker. What I know about him, as a translator, is that he is an accomplished LISTENER. And he is an empathic person, so that when he translates for you, he adds your emotion to his voice, and that emotional resonance, whether he is translating from Spanish to English for my comprehension, or English to Spanish so someone else might be able to hear me, is what makes Alberto so exceptional as a translator. Here he is translating his own life from his native language into mine with the honesty, humbleness, non-pretentiousness that makes him such a wonderful person, in any language. One cannot review this book in a historical vacuum. Real people live out their precious lives in time and place. There is horrific suffering on both sides of all that divides us, that is universal. No one has a monopoly on human suffering. All our stories have merit, and deserve compassion. My own family, like many of us, have forced immigration/exile stories, maybe several generations back, from Ireland during the famines, some in civil wars, some the world wars, those who stayed behind died of hunger, in war, some died in the Holocaust. In the US, the primary narrative we hear about Cuba is that of those who left and took refuge in the US until they can return and reclaim lost properties and status. The stated objective of US policy is 'regime change', an objective shared by most of the Cubans who came here; which would be returning Cuba as a 'client' state. From their perspective, that of profound loss, being exiled from their land of birth, the horrific suffering that attends any war, US policy seems justified. But what about those who gained in the redistribution of wealth? US residents are forbidden by law to travel to Cuba to hear 'the other side' of the story; the poor and disenfranchised that stayed... we forget the vast majority, Cuba's "99%", that stayed and built a country that has the highest standard of literacy, free and universal health care, and public education, and now has a lifespan that exceeds the US by 10 years. Declaring their independence, establishing new social order, has not been easy for Cuba, or individual Cubans no matter where they live. Out of the ashes of a war of independence and a civil war fought simultaneously, Cuba has suffered and survived the longest, harshest economic blockade in all of human history, which is ongoing and as relentless today, as it has been for the past 52 years. Those of us in the US are largely unaware of the consequences of this policy, here, in Cuba and in the world. Most of the US still supports a policy of intervention to force a 'regime change' some have just moved to where they think this can be achieved better from engagement than isolationism. But the right of the Cuban people living in Cuba to nation build as they see fit, and not as what best serves US business interests is a battle of ideas that is still the primary driver behind US policy. The ideological divide of how a country invests and protects its citizens is probably irreconcilable. In the US we don't offer a public safety net like most of the rest of the industrialized world, and we privatize our efforts toward our individual welfare. We now have a society which is extremely unequal opportunities and protections to its citizens. We accept child hunger, homelessness, extreme poverty, imprisonment, unequal pay for women, gun violence to touch on a few inequalities and injustices we endure for the rights of (certain) individuals to amass privilege. Cuba insures fundamentals to all its citizens, like food, shelter, healthcare and education as basic human rights. Cuba has always claimed it is an experiment, and sometimes a failed one, but committed to sharing resources as equally as possible, and insuring the welfare of the most vulnerable, children and the elderly, and often that has led to extreme shared hardship for everyone. No easy choices. But in the US we are choosing to insure the rights of property, corporations are people... Anyway, my sympathies are obvious. What is important here, is that Alberto is a honest witness to his own life and surrounding culture, and he has not embellished, added or detracted the reality from which he has been embedded. He is a child of the 'revolution' and has suffered the profound sacrifices that people have made to try and build a more compassionate society than the one they inherited when Cuba was a proxy colony of the US. There is no malice here, no demonization, just someone making a life with the historical moment in which they live. I love Alberto, he is one of the finest human beings I've ever met, because he has lived a life of service to the betterment of not only Cuba, but rather a child of an ideal that Cuban Independence Fighter Poet Jose Marti, professed; "Humanity is my homeland." What each of us contributes to try and make a better world for all, is really what the Cuban revolution has aspired too. He is Cuban in that universal appeal of Guantanamo, again Jose Marti, "I am a sincere man." Alberto is all of that. That Alberto has written this account in a language that is not his first, that he has worked so hard to

communicate, is a testimony to his devotion.No matter what views you hold about Cuba, here is a Cuban testimony to his times. I'm inspired, again and always. When I see Alberto in a few short weeks, I will have him sign my copy.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Must Read If Traveling To CubaBy C.MilliganHaving met and been impressed with Alberto as our interpreter on a trip to Cuba, I was eager to read his book. Alberto brings serious and faithful integrity to his interpretation. His book brings to life the resolute passion and self discipline required to be one of the best in his field. Equally important, he highlights the incredible sequence of events Cuba has undergone to become a beacon of innovation despite very harsh conditions. Alberto's life story in this book is an inspiration - it will motivate anyone seeking to rise above their circumstances.

In this lively memoir, told with engaging wit and emotion, Alberto Gonzlez Rivero provides an intimate look at Cuba following the Revolution under Fidel Castroa perspective few North Americans ever encounter. By integrating history into his personal narrative, Alberto provides an honest look into the culture and society of Cuba today. From the literacy campaign through the collapse of the Soviet Union to the current challenges of tourism and the dual currency system, this book provides a unique perspective on Cuba from a man who truly knows it. Albertos story personalizes the Cuban experience and will change readers perspective on Cuba while simultaneously inspiring them to pursue their dreams regardless how difficult. Alberto Gonzlez Rivero, poor country boy, masters English, earns his university degree and embarks on a bright teaching future. Suddenly economic disaster strikes his family and almost all Cuban families during the "Special Period" of the 1990s after the Soviet collapse. Alberto, now the young father of two little daughters, struggles mightily to keep food on the table. Just when things are looking especially grim, a chance encounter with Reverend Raul Suarez of the Martin Luther King Center in Havana provides him with the chance to utilize his special gift and training in languages as the interpreter for visiting delegationsand eventually as a translator for Fidel Castro himself. Most Cuban stories are written by those who have emigrated to the US and no longer know Cuba today. The author of this memoir proudly loves Cuba, his life-long home. Alberto is an energetic ambassador for his country, introducing its culture and its beautiful people to visiting delegations from across the world. He does more than translate conversations. He translates Cuba! Proud to be a Cuban he remains grateful for the revolution that gave people like himself the chance to grow and succeed. An important book! A delightful read!