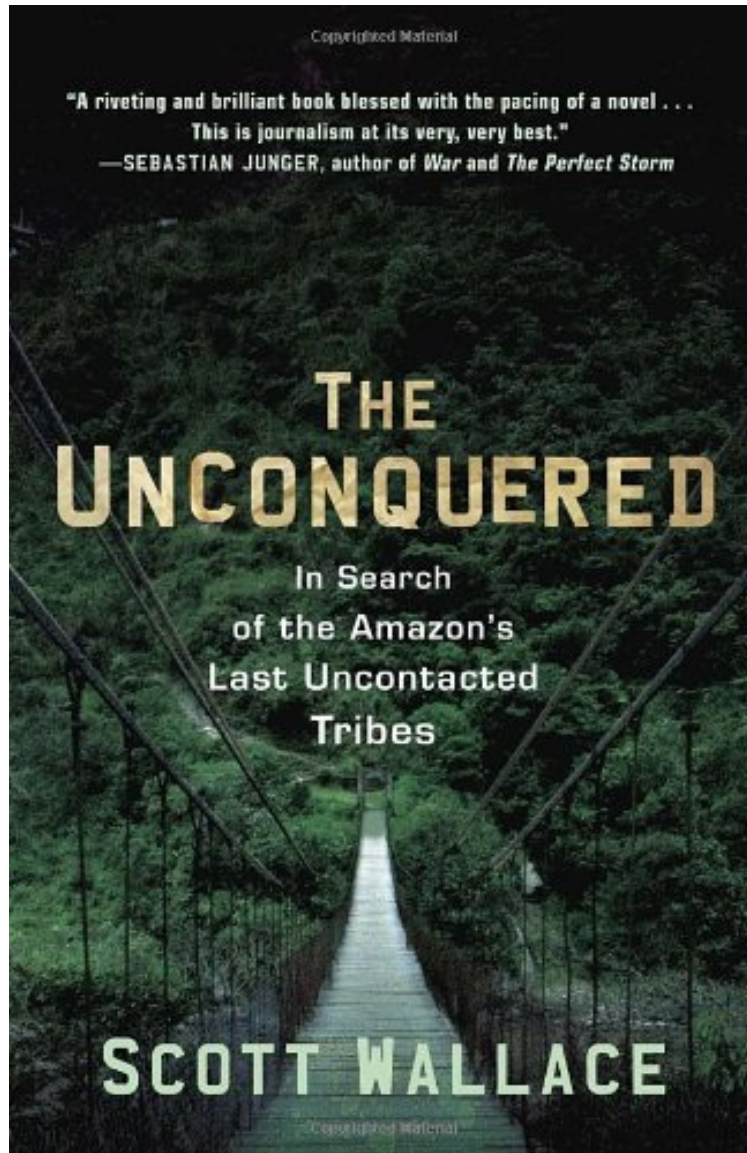


(Download pdf ebook) The Unconquered: In Search of the Amazon's Last Uncontacted Tribes

The Unconquered: In Search of the Amazon's Last Uncontacted Tribes

Scott Wallace

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Scott Wallace : The Unconquered: In Search of the Amazon's Last Uncontacted Tribes before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Unconquered: In Search of the Amazon's Last Uncontacted Tribes:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating jungle adventure book with some thought-provoking

questionsBy CarrieI loved this book. It is a first-person account of the author's experience traveling into a remote section of the rainforest to track indigenous tribes living there. Contrary to what you might expect, the goal of the mission wasn't to actually contact the tribes; rather, the expedition sought to identify where the tribes lived so that the Brazilian government could later track the the tribe's movements and population by air. The book is great on several levels: First and foremost, it is a jungle adventure book. Accessing these tribes is a harrowing process by foot, since they are so deep into the rainforest. Along with the author (who was there as a reporter for National Geographic), there was a photographer, Brazilian citizens working for Brazil's department of Isolated Indians, and members of several "contacted" indigenous tribesmen. The expedition itself was led by a bizarre man named Sydney Possuelo, who has made it his life's mission to protect indigenous tribes from deforestation and crippling exposure to new diseases. Possuelo is a weird man; I spent the entire book trying to figure him out. I alternated between being appalled by him and fascinated by him. Interspersed throughout the jungle tale is a history of the white man's contact with indigenous ian tribes, a history of the department of Isolated Indians, and a history of the evolving theories on how to approach indigenous tribes. Where previously the government sought to "tame" wild Indians, the policy is now to avoid contact, since contact with the white man inevitably brings about loss of native culture and crippling epidemics of disease. (FYI, phrases like "wild Indians" sound extremely derogatory when I write them here, but the author is actually quite sensitive in his use of language throughout the book - whenever he uses words like "wild," "tamed," or "civilized," he is quick to provide historical context to explain his choice in language). The author's discussion of the issue of contact versus no-contact is even-handed and at times philosophical. He raises some interesting questions that genuinely made me think about both sides of the issue. The plight of the so-called "contacted" tribes is eye-opening, with applications to our own tenuous relationship with Native Americans in the US. I highly recommend this book. It is an adventure book, complete with monkeys and sloths and fire ants, but also a very eye-opening look at our culture of consumption and the havoc we have wreaked on all the inhabitants of the rainforest - plants, animals, humans. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating Journey in the By AatwinSome people make tremendous sacrifices for others, such as myself, to read of the primitive conditions and arduous conditions to hike into the heart of the to find undiscovered tribes. The author did an excellent job describing the expedition's journey. Through his words we could visualize the fauna of the jungle, the lack of food and what they had to do to supplement their supplies. He portrays the dangers of the jungle and the helplessness of being isolated from the comforts we take for granted but most of all, the reader is able to get the reader to appreciate those who live away from a modernized society. Overall it was a good read although at times he went into a bit much detail on depicting his surroundings. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Thought Provoking, Emotive and GrippingBy SnapsThere's a lot to think about in this book, which, in itself is quite an achievement. The subject of the book, Sydney Possuelo, is a megalomaniacal tyrant with a noble mission--kind of a reverse White Man's Burden. Possuelo's mission is to successfully cordon off civilization, preventing modern society from reaching "uncontacted" tribes living in the forest. Think about that for a minute or two: his mission is to prevent modernity from reaching people who are living behind a veil of ignorance, in what can only be described as a primitive state. Meanwhile, the rest of us spend our days trying to do the opposite: lift our veil of ignorance. All of science is aimed at this latter goal. The argument for protecting them is that contact with modernity (characterized by greed where the white man is the devil) introduces disease, makes the indios bravos dependent on modern contrivances, causes them to turn their backs on ancestral ways and leaves them in a state of poverty. Possuelo (and the author) posit that these people are not "primitive," that their ways are necessary and sufficient to their happy survival, so why disturb them? Plus, there is the added environmental benefit of leaving large tracts of forest intact as their habitat requires it to be left alone. But I wonder if this isn't just condescension in the same way that missionaries hell-bent on "civilizing" such people are so obviously guilty. Set aside the disease problem (it is a problem, but it's incidental, solvable with enough effort) and look at the often tragic history of these contacted tribes: they become dependent on modern contrivances, they leave their traditional ways and they are ill-adapted to succeeding in the modern world, leaving them poverty-stricken. This tells us that: they like modernity and it's conveniences, they are perhaps not so interested in the old (arduous) ways, and that they have not been educated thoroughly enough to confront the challenges of modern life. Which way do you want to go with that? Should more effort be put into solving those problems or should more effort be put into preventing these problems from arising? Who should decide? Sydney Possuelo? Brazil's government? Brazil's government can't even take care of its own people. The intuitive answer is that the uncontacted people should decide, but how can an uncontacted group decide between two ways of living when the very act of learning enough to make a decision is, ipso facto, to obviate the decision in favor of selecting contact? I don't have the answers. I surely wish these people well.

The extraordinary true story of a journey into the deepest recesses of the Amazon to track one of the planet's last uncontacted indigenous tribes. Even today there remain tribes in the far reaches of the Amazon rainforest that have avoided contact with modern civilization. Deliberately hiding from the outside world, they are 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 Amazons uncharted depths, discovering

the rainforests secrets while moving ever closer to a possible encounter with one such tribe the mysterious flecheiros, or 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 Amazon'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.

Guest er: Jon Lee Anderson on *The Unconquered* In an age when there is little left in the world that can be said to be still "virgin," contemporary travel literature has come to seem increasingly derivative, even farcical. *The Unconquered: In Search of the World's Last Uncontacted Tribes* is a rare exception, an original that works on several levels. Scott Wallace has sensitively documented the immensity, history, the terror, and the beauty of one of the world's last true wildernesses and the people who live within it. This is a wonderful book: deeply moving, riveting by turns, laced with finely wrought passages. On the one hand, *The Unconquered* is the account of a nightmarish three-month expedition into the jungle in 2002 led by the irascible Brazilian wilderness explorer Sydney Possuelo, a legendary defender of the region's last uncontacted Indians. Rife through with moments of danger, loneliness, and hunger, as well as the testosterone-fuelled dramas that seem peculiar to groups of men undergoing hard times together, *The Unconquered* makes a spellbinding tale of real-life high-adventure. This is also the account of an equally fascinating inward journey taken by its author, the American journalist Scott Wallace, who originally joined Possuelo on his trek in order to write about his journey for National Geographic. In this book, Wallace, who renders memorable portraits of his fellow expeditionaries (the cook, Mauro, haunted by nightmares about monkeys who castrate him; Soldado the backwoods scout, who refuses to return home and see his aging mother) is also brutally honest about himself. Recently divorced, Wallace sets off into the jungle just shy of his forty-eighth birthday; he is out-of-shape, guilt-ridden for not having said goodbye to his three young sons, and fretful about the implications of a prolonged separation with his new girlfriend. The main character of *The Unconquered*, however, is Sydney Possuelo, a larger-than-life figure who emerges as a kind of Indian Jones- meets latter-day Bartolome de las Casas. Some years before Wallace met him, Possuelo, Brazil's best-known sertanista, or "agent of contact" with the world's isolated indigenous people, had undergone a crisis of conscience about the destruction wrought by his life's work. He had become instead the main proponent of a no-contact policy for the world's remaining "uncontacted" tribes. He had lobbied for and secured the designation of a vast Maine-sized tract of rain wilderness called the Javari Valley Indigenous Land, to be closed off to all outsiders in perpetuity. It was the refuge of several uncontacted tribes hostile to outsiders, including the implacable flecheiros, the Arrow People, whose territory Possuelo planned to explore. The motives behind Possuelo's 2002 expedition seemed nonetheless obscure, even contradictory. As Possuelo explained it to Wallace, he wished to gather vital information about the flecheiros and to ascertain their wellbeing, but could only do so by penetrating their sanctuary on foot and by dugout canoe with a band of armed men, while at the same time seeking to avoid contact with them. During the journey itself, the inescapable *Catch-22* of Possuelo's logic became more and more apparent until the moment, retold dramatically by Wallace, when the expeditionaries blundered inevitably through a flecheiro settlement, spreading panic as they went. In the end, *The Unconquered* is the unforgettable story of a troubled journey through a doomed landscape, its characters the outsiders and the Indians locked together in an ever-tightening fatal embrace by their respective needs and compulsions. At one point in the book, Possuelo points to a path they have slashed out of the jungle with their machetes and tells Wallace: "Five years from now, you will never know we were here." But Wallace is unconvinced, and notes ruefully: "It was doubtful the Arrow People would forget us so easily." Jon Lee Anderson is a staff writer for the *New Yorker* magazine. His books include: *Che Guevara: A Revolutionary Life*, *The Fall of Baghdad*, and *The Lions Grave: Dispatches from Afghanistan*. Anderson began his reporting career in 1979, in Peru. In 2009, he won an Overseas Press Club Award for his reporting on Rio de Janeiro's gangland. "Wallace's foreboding is matched by his sense of wonder." *New York Times Book "Astonishing."* *The London Sunday Times* "A rousing adventure tale." *Wall Street Journal* "Wallace's gripping account takes us upriver to a place very few outsiders have ever seen." *The Boston Globe* "What a great book! An adventure story worthy of Joseph Conrad or Peter Matthiessen." *The Oregonian* "Rousing. TIME" "Startlingly novelistic." *Salon.com* "It's easy to picture *The Unconquered* being made into a movie. *Washington Post Express* "Masterful...positively cinematic." *Yale Alumni Magazine* "An eye-opening read one of the most gripping pieces of non-fiction around. You'll swear you are reading a thriller novel. *Guernica* "Dream assignment or nightmare? An editor from National Geographic asked journalist Scott Wallace to join an expedition into the deepest wilds of the jungle to find the mysterious People of the Arrow." While the experience was

pretty much a nightmare, it's a blessing for readers of Wallace's fascinating book. Associated Press Echoing his earliest European explorers, Wallace crafts a tale that is part gripping adventure story, part window into the unexpected complexities of a developing country where uncontacted tribes stand between a resource-hungry economy and an area abounding in natural wealth. Indian Country Today Rife with poachers, drug smugglers, illegal gold miners and violent tribes already acquainted with the dangers of modern life Wallace describes the trek in vivid, if unsettling, terms. Macleans Wallace joins the tribe of jungle-besotted literary types led by Redmond O'Hanlon and David Grann and presents a credibly incredible tale about his voyage past the edge of modernity. Huffington Post "A gripping tale of adventure." Washingtonian While it's hard to imagine that stone-age tribes still persist in a world of cell phones, satellites and social media, it's even harder to understand how difficult it is to police these isolated regions, to keep them free of outsiders who could endanger a way of life that has nearly disappeared Wallace's narrative is apt and penetrating. SE Journal From the Hardcover edition. About the Author SCOTT WALLACE is a journalist whose assignments have taken him from the Himalayas and the streets of Baghdad to the Alaskan Arctic and the . A former correspondent for the Guardian and Newsweek, he has written for National Geographic, National Geographic Adventure, and Harpers. His photography has appeared in Smithsonian, Outside, and Sports Afield. His television credits include CBS, CNN, and National Geographic Channel. From the Hardcover edition.