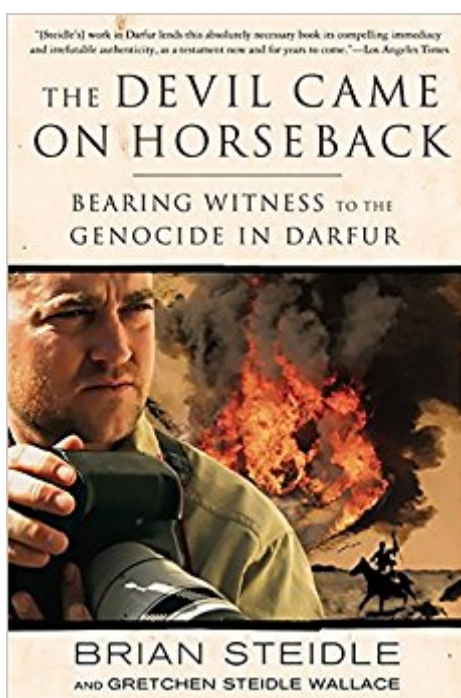


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# The Devil Came On Horseback: Bearing Witness To The Genocide In Darfur



## Synopsis

Former United States Marine Brian Steidle served for six months in Darfur as an unarmed military observer for the African Union. There he witnessed first-hand the ongoing genocide, and documented every day of his experience using email, audio journals, notebook after notebook and nearly 1,000 photographs. Gretchen Steidle Wallace, his sister, who wrote this book with Brian, corresponded with him throughout his time in Darfur. Fired upon, taken hostage, a witness to villages destroyed and people killed, frustrated by his mission's limitations and the international community's reluctance to intervene, Steidle resigned and has since become an advocate for the world to step in and stop this genocide. *The Devil Came on Horseback* depicts the tragic impact of an Arab government bent on destroying its black African citizens, the maddening complexity of international inaction in response to blatant genocide, and the awkward, yet heroic transformation of a former Marine turned humanitarian. It is a gripping and moving memoir that bears witness to atrocities we have too long averted our eyes from, and reveals that the actions of just one committed person have the power to change the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

This impassioned memoir is a cry of conscience and an informative, if politically and historically limited, analysis by a former U.S. Marine. Steidle began work in Sudan in 2004, as a military contractor with the two-year-old Joint Military Commission to monitor the fragile cease-fire agreement in Africa's longest civil war between the Arab-dominated government of Sudan in the north and the rebel SPLA representing black African tribes of the south. As his career advances,

Steidle is drawn into the province of Darfur, where government troops and government-backed Arab militias (known as Janjaweed or "the devil on a horse") operate against a 2003 uprising of black African tribes (overwhelmingly fellow Muslims) in a campaign whose virulence and destruction clearly amount to genocide. Steidle, who eventually became an unarmed American military observer for the African Union's cease-fire coalition, composed this account with his sister, an activist and founder of Global Grassroots, in conjunction with their documentary film of the same name and a traveling photo exhibit and college lecture tour. Drawing heavily on notes and e-mails home, Steidle's personal and fluent account effectively channels an idealistic, adventuresome young man's growing frustration and horror in the face of ongoing crimes against humanity and international complacency. (Apr.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Former U.S. Marine Steidle was part of an unarmed team sent to Darfur, Sudan, by the African Union to monitor compliance with a cease-fire agreement between rebel groups. Armed with a camera and notebook, Steidle chronicled his six-month mission, witnessing the harrowing aftermath of violence and the ongoing genocide. He found himself in the line of fire, was taken hostage, and ultimately morphed into a correspondent as he unburdened himself via e-mails sent home. He recounts the ineffectiveness he felt in his role as observer and his frustration that the international community has done so little to intervene in the massive killing of non-Arab citizens. More than a firsthand account of the horrors of genocide, this is a stirring account of one man's transformation in the face of the inhumanity of senseless death, and the occasional moments of humanity in the midst of violence. Vanessa Bush Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Wasn't what I expected. Very drawn out.

If you agree that these atrocities should not happen on our watch, but do not know the facts about what goes on when the news is focusing on celebrities, please read this book. A concerned global citizen took the time to report on the events that transpire in Darfur every day. There is also a documentary of the same name. Read and decide how to act. Let's hope that this book will be defunct soon because Darfur is no longer in turmoil.

Detailed eye witness account of the Muslim genocidal attacks in the Sudan.

The book was recommended as a primer on the Sudanese conflict by a trusted friend. It is an emotional account of an observer's perspective as others have suggested. The deeper political underpinnings and history are not seemingly here. It is a bit of a "personal trauma tale" that gives a compelling first person experiential account of the time spent in Sudan. As others have suggested, and I would agree, The tragedy and genocide in Sudan is very real and horrific but after reading this book, I didn't feel I understood all of the down-range actors and combatants. Certainly a first-hand account of the aftermath of killing and genocide but stops short of any context and wider understanding. As much a crime scene report of sorts rather than topical discussion. Regional analysis of the causes? No. Historical background of the struggle and history between all of the forces in the region? No. Catharsis for the author? Maybe. In some ways recalls the post-Srebrenica descriptions of Ratko Mladic's genocide in that it describes the crimes against humanity in vivid detail with pictures-yet leaves the reader asking, Why did they do that?? Storys of violence, genocide and suffering, but in the end, understanding how the region got to this, not in this book. No understanding of the motivations, non-region foreign involvement, etc. Depending on your interest in the topic, other sources may be a better primary source.

Item as described.

Worthwhile, but ultimately the reader feels the same frustration as the author: What good is this doing? Why can't I really help?

Former U.S. Marine Brian Steidle signed on to go to Darfur on an African Union ceasefire monitoring mission, but standing idly by while "African" civilians were massacred, mutilated, and raped by predominantly "Arab" tormentors in the service of the Sudanese Government was not what he had bargained for. In his eyes, he gained a small measure of redemption by meticulously documenting everything he saw, heard, and experienced, and then trying to stir the world's conscience, though this was certainly not his initial intention. This book's greatest strength comes from the vivid and detailed descriptions of the author's often-harrowing experiences. *The Devil Came on Horseback* pulls no punches in describing the slow-motion tsunami that the Khartoum regime is inflicting upon its people. Steidle provides great descriptions of events and sequences of events, and these are supported by a very good map of Darfur, which enables the reader to follow the evolution of events on the ground. What is often lacking in the book is a detailed analysis of the

complicated social, cultural, and political context of the Darfur conflict and genocide, though in Part Three ("Genocide") he provides more of this kind of information than he does earlier in the book. His outrage and passion are palpable, but analysis is often lacking. A novel aspect of this volume is that the author is a military observer, but he unfortunately does not look very deeply at the political constraints or other factors that hinder the effectiveness of African Union forces. Steidle's military background would have given him an interesting vantage point from which to examine the pros and cons of peacekeeping forces led by the African Union as opposed to the United Nations, for example, but he never goes into much detail on these important issues. Nevertheless, Steidle's first-hand witnessing of actual events in the Darfur tragedy is a valuable addition to the existing emerging literature on Darfur. This book is a great companion volume to works that focus on the social, political, and historical context of the Darfur humanitarian crisis, such as Gerard Prunier's *The Ambiguous Genocide* or Julie Flint and Alex de Waal's *A Short History of a Long War*.

This is an eyewitness account of the genocide in Darfur. In 2004, former marine, Brian Steidle, signed on with the Joint Military Commission (JMC) for a position as a Patrol Leader in the Sudan. The JMC was created to oversee conflict in central Sudan and monitor a ceasefire. His job was to consist of investigating ceasefire violations. Steidle accepted the position with the JMC totally ignorant of the area in which he would be working and its political issues and conflicts. By the time he arrived in the Sudan, a full blown genocide was in progress. Steidle's role was that of reporting what he saw, and what he saw was a Sudanese government that stood idly by as innocent black African civilians, rather than rebel forces, were routinely killed and tortured by Arab civilians known as "Janjaweed" (the devil on horseback) with the seeming blessing of the Sudanese government based in Khartoum and the aid of its government troops. Frustrated by his watchdog role, Steidle carefully documented all that he saw in order to bear witness to this large scale genocide that was taking place and alert the world to it, as he was stationed where journalists were nowhere to be found. His is a compelling birds-eye view of a regional conflict that degenerated into a full scale genocide of its native people. The shortcoming of the book is the author's ignorance of the area and its historical and political conflicts. Thus, nothing in the book is grounded into any particular context, causing it to be a somewhat one dimensional account. While the author's outrage is palpable, so is his ignorance. Still, it is a harrowing account of the suffering of the Sudan's black citizens and an indictment of the Sudanese government and the international community.

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