

FOREWORD/ COMMENTS

"OF PEOPLE, POPPIES and GOD"

My good *amigo* Jim "*el Gringo*" Price weaves a tale of intrigue, danger and adventure that one is told is a fictional account set in a real environment, during historical times. Like a strong tequila, it is potent with truth and personal experience crafted to provide the reader with a real sense of *la frontera*—the border. As I turned the pages of the draft of this book entitled, "Of People, Poppies and God," I immediately realized that this is a story about a man who has lived it, tasted it, felt it, smelled it, and above all surpassed the heady allure of the dark side of the border environment.

The border with the United States and Mexico is a unique world, in and of itself. Here, one can become easily lost in all that is American, while embracing all that is Latin. *Ambos Nogales*, the sister cities of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico and Nogales, Arizona are the perfect setting for this tale. And, what goes around, comes around. Protagonist Jimmy Waters struggles with life's challenges along the border in the late fifties and sixties while I personally pause a moment to flash back to the mid-to-late eighties where I, too felt the pump of the adrenaline, the over-enhanced keenness of the five senses as I cautiously picked my way down a steep, rocky canyon trail on the outskirts of Nogales, in the moonless dark of night, playing out a nightly dangerous scene in the real-life game of hunter versus hunted.

As the federal agent, armed with my H&K MP-5 submachine gun strapped across my chest, and cradled in my right arm while peering "down trail" through my hand-held night vision device with my left appendage, I hear the barely audible "click" of a boot toe against a stone. I freeze; it's his move. Did he hear me? How many are there? Do they have guns pointed at me right now? Is this it? Is it a load of drugs on the backs of human "*mules*?" Or, is it a group of foreign born "*illegals*," following single-file behind their "*coyote*," their smuggler? This was my life in the eighties. I know of what Jim Price writes.

Fast forward again, nearly a decade. I am still flashing memories. It is now the mid-nineties. I am talking to "*el Gringo*" Jim Price in an undisclosed location in Nogales, Arizona. He is introducing me to a *confidential source*. I have returned to these hallowed grounds of cross-border mischief, called Nogales. This time I'm the boss. I have a couple hundred well trained, well armed and self-motivated federal agents at my disposal. And guess what? Yes, it comes around again! The intrigue and the adventure of which Jim Price so eloquently and so accurately depicts in this book, have come around to tantalize another generation, a new decade.

As a friend, junior in years, I have learned from this wise gentleman, Jim Price. Most assuredly, Jim studied and learned from his elders and role models. One thing we can philosophically agree upon is our belief--as in the title of this book--it is our strong faith in God that separates us, the Good Men from the Bad Boys. Good reading!

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