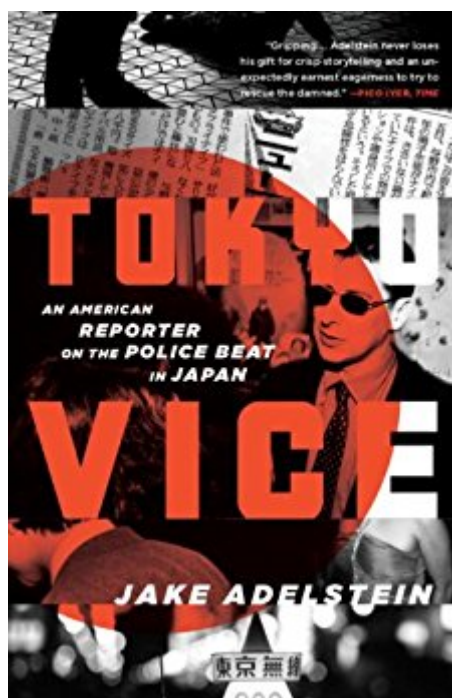


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Tokyo Vice: An American Reporter On The Police Beat In Japan (Vintage Crime/Black Lizard)



Synopsis

A riveting true-life tale of newspaper noir and Japanese organized crime from an American investigative journalist.Â Jake Adelstein is the only American journalist ever to have been admitted to the insular Tokyo Metropolitan Police Press Club, where for twelve years he covered the dark side of Japan: extortion, murder, human trafficking, fiscal corruption, and of course, the yakuza. But when his final scoop exposed a scandal that reverberated all the way from the neon soaked streets of Tokyo to the polished Halls of the FBI and resulted in a death threat for him and his family, Adelstein decided to step down. Then, he fought back. In Tokyo Vice he delivers an unprecedented look at Japanese culture and searing memoir about his rise from cub reporter to seasoned journalist with a price on his head.From the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Of all things to recommend as an introduction to Japanese/American culture, this is certainly an odd choice (dealing with Japan's rotting underbelly, rather than their clean streets or high academic standards, say), but that's exactly what I did. A friend of mine is collaborating with Japanese colleagues at work (entirely legitimate), and I suggested he read this book as cultural background.In

addition to all the TRUECRIME stuff, this book covers a lot of mundane cultural topics, transferable between journalism at a large company to other work in a large company, to relations between professionals in other aspects of Japanese life, etc.... and then there are the psychotic Yakusa, and Japan's attitudes towards sex, etc... wild stuff. I suspect Adelstein is following a contemporary Japanese literary tradition in journalist monographs in lying his head off whenever it can improve the story without distorting the facts. Once you appreciate that this is a) to protect sources b) doesn't change the ultimate facts c) makes for a better story and d) is (probably) what other Japanese authors are doing... I got over it, but this structure was the main draw-back for me.

True story, but probably embellished a bit on the details. Although, Tokyo came alive as seen from the eyes of a gaijin journalist clawing his way up the grimy newspaper beat reporter chain and creating a legend for himself by challenging the Yakusa on the vice beat. Colorful, crime-ridden, and some truly sad stories regarding the world of human trafficking for prostitution.

I really liked Tokyo Vice. There are a multitude of books/blogs/journals written about Japan from the pov of a white westerner, but few have taken the hard work to really get to know the country as Adelstein has. Becoming completely fluent speaking, reading and writing Japanese is a large task for any foreigner, but bringing it up to a professional level good enough for the largest newspaper in the country? Amazing! His book is populated by colorful and memorable people from his experience living in Japan as a journalist for the Yomiuri newspaper. And of course, the main attraction, the yakuza, are present and detailed in depth, from honorable outsiders to the sadistically brutal, Adelstein explains the yakuza as real people not easily blanketed under general descriptions. People such as yakuza Cat, cop Sekigahara, and hostess Helena really fill out the book and Adelstein makes clear that his investigations into the yakuza were not a solo venture but a product of the author's courage and hardwork, as well as the invaluable help of the friends he made in Japan. He has an easy-going, fun to read style that feels like a close friend relating his stories from abroad. Highly recommended!

This is how great Twitter can be: when I was just 20 pages into Tokyo Vice, I posted this update: "Jake Adelstein's TOKYO VICE makes me want to be yakuza" He responded the next day with: "@calebjross It's supposed to have the opposite effect. :)" Considering that this exchange was completely unanticipated, I was quite surprised by the direct line of contact with the author. I anticipated the exchange ending there. But, then I finished the book, and I realized how insulting my

first comment could have appeared. Tokyo Vice is such an amazing story, one that, though filed under "true crime" touches on memoir. Adelstein's position as a reporter with the unique opportunity to out certain immoral (to say the least) yakuza behavior, bleeds into his personal life in deeply affecting ways. As soon as I finished the book, I posted again on Twitter:"@jakeadelstein I must apologize for my earlier statement of wanting to be yakuza. I just finished TOKYO VICE. Incredible story, sir."And he came back with:"@calebjross Apology accepted. :)"Such a gentleman. Tokyo Vice goes highly recommended.

Pretty shocking and intense story here. The links to the US and the encroachment of the Yakuza into the grey market and legitimate financial world both in Japan and abroad is simultaneously fascinating and terrifying. Readers would benefit from some appendices at the end that detail the roles/ranks of the individuals described in the book, as the Gokudo is a very complex and hierarchical society.

This book was so interesting and fast moving that I found it hard to put down. It is well written and describes a Japan that is unseen by most tourists. I highly recommend this book.

Jake Adelstein is one of a kind, a Jewish guy who became a reporter for the Yomiuri Shimbun, one of the largest and most respected newspapers in Japan. There has probably been no gaijin (foreigner) who has ever done that before or since. He was not just a crime beat reporter. He wrote an "anthology" that took down one of the biggest Yakuza boss in Japan. This is the story of how he did it. Along the way, the reader gets to see the underbelly of the beast, the sex trade in Japan. He captures both the best and the worst of Japan, the incredible friendships that develop in Japan vs. the callousness towards enemies and foreigners, the giri (obligation) that develops between friends and transcends generations vs. the cowardice that allows men to avert their eyes to the suffering of others, and other paradoxes of Japanese society. For example, his insightful description of the differences between Japanese restaurants and hospitals could have been only come from somebody who is both inside and outside. He is more Japanese than Jewish. He understood and conveyed the difference between guilt and shame better than any author in recent memory. It is an amazing book and I recommend it highly.

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