

Brazillionaires by Alex Cuadros

Author	: Alex Cuadros
File Size	: 158342 kb
Status	: Available
Last Access	: 5 minutes ago



Description Brazillionaires by Alex Cuadros

For readers of Michael Lewis comes an engrossing tale of a country's spectacular rise and fall, intertwined with the story of Brazil's wealthiest citizen, Eike Batista—a universal story of hubris and tragedy that uncovers the deeper meaning of this era of billionaires.

NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE *FINANCIAL TIMES*

When Bloomberg News invited the young American journalist Alex Cuadros to report on Brazil's emerging class of billionaires at the height of the historic Brazilian boom, he was poised to cover two of the biggest business stories of our time: how the giants of the developing world were triumphantly taking their place at the center of global capitalism, and how wealth inequality was changing societies everywhere. The billionaires of Brazil and their massive fortunes resided at the very top of their country's economic pyramid, and whether they quietly accumulated exceptional power or extravagantly displayed their decadence, they formed a potent microcosm of the world's richest .001 percent.

Eike Batista, a flamboyant and charismatic evangelist for the country's new gospel of wealth, epitomized much of this rarefied sphere: In 2012, Batista ranked as the eighth-richest person in the world, was famous for his marriage to a beauty queen, and was a fixture in the Brazilian press. His constantly repeated ambition was to become the world's richest man and to bring Brazil along with him to the top.

But by 2015, Batista was bankrupt, his son Thor had been indicted for manslaughter, and Brazil—its president facing impeachment, its provinces combating an epidemic, and its business and political class torn apart by scandal—had become a cautionary tale of a country run aground by its elites.

Over the four years Cuadros was on the billionaire beat, he reported on media moguls and televangelists, energy barons and shadowy figures from the years of military dictatorship, soy barons who lived on the outskirts of the Amazon, and new-economy billionaires spinning money from speculation. He learned just how deeply they all reached into Brazilian life. They held sway over the economy, government, media, and stewardship of the environment; they determined the spiritual fates and populated the imaginations of their countrymen. Cuadros's zealous reporting takes us from penthouses to courtrooms, from favelas to extravagant art fairs, from scenes of unimaginable wealth to desperate, massive street protests. Within a business narrative that deftly explains and dramatizes the volatility of the global economy, Cuadros offers us literary journalism with a grand sweep.

Praise for *Brazillionaires*

“A wild, richly reported tale about Brazil’s recent economic rise and fall, and some of the biggest, most colorful characters in business in Brazil who now have a global reach. . . . Cuadros’s story really takes off when he focuses on Eike Batista, an over-the-top one-time billionaire who became the country’s corporate mascot, only to go bankrupt in a dramatic unraveling.”—**Andrew Ross Sorkin, *the New York Times***

“In this excellent book [Cuadros] has managed to use billionaires to illuminate the lives of both rich and poor Brazilians, and all those in between.”—***The Economist***

“*Brazillionaires* [is] journalist Alex Cuadros’s compelling tale of Brazil’s superrich, which deftly weaves lurid soap opera with high finance and outrageous political skullduggery. . . . If Brazil sometimes comes across as a circus in this compelling, thoroughly researched account, it is because it can be just that.”—***The Wall Street Journal***

From Publishers Weekly May 02, 2016 – Part memoir, part exposé, and part historical narrative, this fascinating look at wealth in Brazil is a strong debut for Cuadros, former Bloomberg News "billionaires reporter" for Latin America. It's not surprising that a country larger in size than the United States and home to vast natural resources has become one of the world's top economies. What is surprising is Brazil's number of billionaires 54 in U.S. dollars and 150 by the Brazilian real and how quickly some got rich, such as oil magnate Eike Batista, who rapidly acquired \$30 billion and then lost it all in just a year and a half. Born and raised in America, Cuadros relates his experiences as an outsider, writing that he sometimes "missed the codes" regarding issues such as race, religion, and government. While explaining how Brazil's billionaires "get rich and stay rich," he explores the role of agriculture, environmental regulations, corruption, and media. Touching on the last point, he describes how the enormous Globo TV network, owned by the billionaire Marinho family, frequently inserts didactic morals into its immensely popular telenovelas. Power is clearly the real impetus for the driven individuals profiled in the book. Readers will be eager to see what topic Cuadros tackles next.

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