



Eclipse

Richard North Patterson

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The spellbinding story of an American lawyer who takes on a nearly impossible case—the defense of an African freedom fighter against his corrupt government’s charge of murder

Damon Pierce’s life has just reached a defining moment: a gifted California lawyer, he’s being divorced by his wife and his work often seems soulless. Then he receives a frantic e-mail from Marissa Brand Okari—a woman he loved years ago—and decides to risk everything to respond to her plea for help.

Marissa’s husband, Bobby Okari, is the charismatic leader of a freedom movement in the volatile west African nation of Luandia, which is being torn apart by the world’s craving for its vast supply of oil. Bobby’s outspoken opposition to the exploitation of his homeland by PetroGlobal—a giant American oil company with close ties to Luandia’s brutal government—has enraged General Savior Karama, the country’s autocratic ruler. After Bobby leads a protest rally during a full eclipse of the sun, everyone in his home village is massacred by government troops. And now Bobby has been arrested and charged with the murder of three PetroGlobal workers. Still drawn to Marissa, Pierce agrees to defend Bobby, hoping to save both Bobby and Marissa from almost certain death. But the lethal politics of Luandia may cost Pierce his life instead.

Culminating in a dramatic show trial and a desperate race against time, *Eclipse* combines a thrilling narrative with a vivid look at the human cost of the global lust for oil. Here is Richard North Patterson at his compelling best, confirming his place as our most provocative author of popular fiction.

Eclipse Details

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From Reader Review Eclipse for online ebook

James Thane says

Recently divorced, California lawyer Damon Pierce receives an urgent message from Marissa Brand, a woman he once loved (and perhaps still does), asking him to come to the West African country of Luandia. Marissa's husband, an activist named Bobby Okari has been accused of murder by the corrupt, brutal regime that runs the country.

Luandia sits on an oil of ocean and lots of outsiders, Americans included, are anxious to get their hands on it. None of them are much concerned about the way in which Luandia's government exploits and abuses its own people. Nor do they care about the catastrophic environmental consequences of the oil production.

Pierce is determined to save Bobby and so becomes his lawyer at great personal risk. Patterson weaves a complicated web of intrigue that is at once scary and terribly disheartening, and by the time you finish the book, you want to swear off ever using a drop of oil again.

I have always been a huge fan of Patterson's work, especially his political thrillers, and I really wanted to like this book as well. There is a terrible earnestness about it; in addition to telling a captivating story, Patterson is obviously determined to open our eyes to the consequences of our addiction to foreign oil.

And therein lies the problem, such as there is one. A lot of the book is spent in an effort to educate the reader to the situation in Luandia, which is a stand-in for Nigeria, and to the the larger implications of our dependency on the resources of countries like it. In consequence, the book seems almost preachy at times, and it takes a fair amount for time for the book to really gather steam. Once it does, though, you can't put it down.

I'm giving this book three stars, which to me means that it's really very good, but not excellent. I respect the book's good intentions and it's an appropriate reminder of the fact that our continued addiction to oil--and to low oil prices--has a cost that goes well beyond that which we pay at the pump. And, once it does get rolling, it's very compelling. But I don't think it's as riveting as a lot of Patterson's other work.

Thom Swennes says

The names were changed to protect the innocent; the story was written to expose the guilty. Most novels, though fictional, are inspired by or contain facts. This is one of those stories. Profit by the all powerful oil companies of the world have exploited countries and caused ecological disasters in the name of profit. Wars have been waged and peoples oppressed to make, maintain and secure vast revenues. Damon Pierce and Marissa Brand met in a creative writing class. They both experienced a spontaneous and mutual attraction, the racial aspect of a relationship never really occurred to either of them. When Damon and Marissa became better acquainted he also found out about Bobby Okari. Bobby was a passionate social and environmental activist that was protesting against the multi-national corporations and conglomerates that were raping and defiling the lands of Western Africa. He perceives Bobby as a rival for her affections but soon found out that her first love was the nation of Luandia and its people. Bobby was the closest person to her true love and the logical choice for her husband. She marries Bobby and they move to Africa. Five years later, as Damon, now a successful San Francisco attorney at the end of an unwise and unsuccessful marriage receives a plea for

help from his old flame. He decides to act on her behalf. This decision takes him to West Africa and to the country of Luandia. This nation, like many of the neighboring countries, has vast oil reserves and western companies are building up their oil fields. The money pours into the country but doesn't trickle down to the masses. Many of these countries are collectively referred to as third world but in point of fact, mismanagement and public corruption are the main cause of their woes. Bobby Okari plans a rally that coincides with a solar eclipse. This starts an unstoppable chain of events that speeds the reader into the depths of darkness and terror. When I started to read this book I thought it would be similar to works of Wilbur Smith. What is often said of assumptions holds true, Richard North Patterson is like no other writer I have yet read. This is a book that is sure to appeal to a wide reading audience as it is both interesting and tackles a multitude of social, racial, geographical and historical aspects.

James says

Patterson does an excellent job of taking the reader into an environment of fear and paranoia in this socio-political thriller set in a fictional west African oil-rich nation (think Nigeria). An American lawyer tries to defend an activist being framed for the murder of oil company workers in a country run by a ruthless and totally corrupt military dictator. Working against him are a corrupt government which owes nothing to its people because it is supported by oil money and doesn't have to levy and collect taxes and the western nations (especially the U.S.) who are all too willing to turn a blind eye to human rights abuses as long as the corrupt dictator keeps the oil flowing. Add in the culpability of the oil company which only wants to protect its interests from competitors and keep its operations intact, and you have a hopeless case.

There's melodrama associated with the lawyer's involvement with the activists' wife, but this subplot keeps the action moving and provides motivation for the lawyer's willingness to take far-reaching risks - beyond mere altruism.

The audio version includes an interview with the author following the conclusion to the novel which adds significantly to the reader's understanding of the novel and its relation to the reality of modern global economics of oil production and distribution.

Rifat says

The book starts very slow it has nothing that makes you want to read it more ... its more like a story being told to some middle-school kids ... did not get me to want to read it further Sorry !! Just honest !! Left it half way

Dirk Fecho says

I listened to this in the car as well and enjoyed it very much. Our thirst for oil comes at such a price that most probably don't understand...well done and look forward to more of Patterson's books!

Mocha Girl says

Richard North Patterson's *Eclipse* is marketed as a legal thriller that follows Boston-born attorney Damon Pierce to Africa to defend an old crush, Marissa, and her African husband against bogus charges planted by an evil, terrorist regime fueled by an American oil-company.

The novel excels in demonstrating the destruction, politics, and corruption that thrives in the "dirty" oil business, in fact at times this aspect is a bit repetitive. Character development drags a bit when describing Damon and Marissa's history and attraction to each other. While the author uses lots of dialog to flesh them out, I still thought Marissa and her husband, Bobby, were stock characters with Marissa's unresolved childhood and identity issues haunting her well into adulthood shading her a bit as a "tragic mulatto" and Bobby as a young Mandela-inspired African idealist. These two were so ill-matched against the sadistic henchmen of the regime that it was no surprise when they were framed for mass murder (of an entire village) and sedition. It was also no surprise that Damon seemed born and primed for this opportunity to save them -- staving off a mid-life crisis and recent divorce and bolstered by a strong, successful background in international litigation, he was perfect for the job.

The real crux of the story is the spotlight the author places on the global impact that the energy sector has as its minions exploit the poor, devastate the environment, and feed the greedy. Another plus is the legal wrangling and courtroom drama scenes as Damon wrestles with international law and politics, big business, and a tight deadline; thus patient and persistent readers are eventually rewarded although I did not find the novel (as a whole) nearly as "thrilling" or "spellbinding" as the back cover implies.

Tami says

3.5 stars

Eclipse was actually probably heading to 4.5 stars or maybe even 5 ...until the last chapter. What a disappointment that was!!! Otherwise, this novel about an American lawyer who heads to a fictional oil-rich African nation to lead the defense of a "freedom fighter" he knew in university and is now accused of murder, sedition, and other charges was actually quite a gripping read!! That Damon is called to Africa by the freedom fighter's wife, who he also knew from university, and grew (and grows) close to, adds to the novel's complexity. It is also that complexity that is this novel's downfall, as it was hard to follow all the political manifestations that were going on. I suppose Richard North Patterson could've done this intentionally to mirror the confusion and changing allegiances that often happen in the circumstances, but I did find it more of a deterrant than it probably needed to be. That's my only complaint/critique, though.. *Eclipse* is quite a stunning read!!!

Laura says

I think I read *Eclipse* too soon after reading *Exile*. There were too many story line similarities so that the power of the story got a little lost for me. This time the nice white guy hero, Damon Pierce, met a biracial woman, Marissa, and her soon-to-be husband, Bobby Okari while at UC Berkeley more than a decade ago. Of course, Damon is attracted to Marissa, but Marissa follows charismatic Bobby back to his homeland of Luandia (taking the place of Nigeria) to fight for the people against evil dictators and the multi-national oil

companies destroying the people of the delta of Luandia.

Then Marissa calls for Damon's help. Bobby is on trial for his life, accused of lynching three oil workers during a demonstration. Damon travels to Luandia and must deal with a dark and frightening country, filled with violence and corruption. It is after 9/11, so the US fears Al Qaeda and is willing to work with violent dictators as long as the oil keeps flowing. Damon is way over his head in this situation, but he keeps fighting for Bobby and Marissa. The plot is very complicated as Damon must negotiate with killers, liars, and thieves. No one can be trusted.

My struggles came from this very American look at the struggles in Africa that have resulted from Western exploitation of resources. I think it helps American readers to read African writers on the situations in their countries. And then there is the hero, stepping in to try to save the day. Bobby Okari's idealism results in torture and imprisonment, but Damon can come in bring about change. That troubles me a little. The story was fast-paced and interesting, but not as strong as some of the other Patterson books I've read.

Sarah says

This book was very realistic from beginning to end. When quickly reading the afterword it was based on events that actually happened in Nigeria. The characters were believable. It was refreshing to see that the book didn't necessarily end the way most people would want, ie. the american saves the day and gets the girl. It takes the topic of genocide and throws the reader right in the middle of it. It almost makes you feel as if you are there amongst the characters, experiencing this travesty that happens in countries that receive little to no assistance. Legal principles and beliefs are thrown out the door and it's a society that revolves around money. Money made from the oil rigs in the bays, money used to keep people safe, money that has bought the government and it's followers. Very interesting take on a subject that i have not read much about.

Philip Baumbach says

The title is misleading. I was expecting a story about an eclipse whereas it was only a sideline. However the book was good and painted a bleak picture of life in third world oil producing countries where corruption is rife. It is a story about a layer and his defence of a person who speaks out against corruption. An interesting story an one which opened my eyes to a snapshot of life in such a country.

Catherine says

If you've read "Confessions of an Economic Hit Man" by John Perkins, which is nonfiction, reading a fictionalized version of a true story set in Luandia (otherwise known as Nigeria) adds tremendously to the already gruesome picture described by Perkins, by adding the impact of characters who represent corrupt government officials, distant uncaring oil company officials, and the damaged people of the country and culture affected. In "Confessions" we see the machinations of a conglomerate made up of Oil, IMF and World Bank actors on a stage that is too naive to fend them off. The over-extended debt-ridden country now exploited becomes a slave to the IMF and World Bank, all of which feed into US corporate coffers. But in this book we see the damage on the ground, and its impact on individual lives. Most notably, in this case, the

life of a true hero to Nigeria who created a nonviolent movement to bring to the world awareness of the injustice, government corruption, and an eco-disaster with worldwide implications. The story centers on Bobby Okari (in real life Ken Saro-Weva) waging a nonviolent war against an alliance of corrupt government officials protecting their cash cow, the oil companies. It's depressing and moving at the same time, and if you really want to know what's going on in Nigeria, a very good start. Mom read this book and recommended it. I do too.

Christina says

Well, a book purportedly written about Nigerian human rights /environmentalist Ken Saro-Wiwa, who was murdered by dictator Sani Abacha in 1995 for trumped up murder charges, but actually for speaking on behalf of the Ogoni people whose territory in the Niger Delta was polluted and destroyed by the Shell Oil company.

The irksome part was the insertion of a white American lawyer knight savior "obiyo" character who shows up in "Luandia" to defend Bobby in the kangaroo court, and also covets and sleeps with the wife, Marissa!

In fact, 2 yrs after his execution, an American human rights firm did sue Shell, and the trial was stopped just before, when they agreed to a \$15 m settlement w/o ever admitting guilt.

Descriptions of torture and murder and rape and depraved; horrible things people are capable of against one another, all for money and power.

And a sad indictment on us all, for choosing comfort, convenience over the lives of fellow humans.

Billy says

Slowly builds to an intense end...

This is the first of Patterson's novels that I have read so I have nothing with which to compare it for Mr. Patterson. This review is, therefore, offered in comparison to like works from other authors. I had to start reading this 3 times before I finally continued to the end; I won't review a book that I haven't finished reading (just doesn't seem fair to me).

The book started slow for me. I put it down and came back to it a week later and it was still slow. The 3rd time I picked it up, I kept going and, after about the first 100 pages, it became very interesting. So, the offering of 3 stars (where I may have offered 4) is mainly because it took a while for me to get interested.

Patterson sets a compelling scene, creating a lively and believable fictional country (loosely based upon Nigeria) and government and an oil producing International Corporation. The fact that all of this is so real, so "ripped-from-the-headlines", only serves to assist Patterson in creating a tale that is all too understandable. Perhaps the biggest thing lacking in this book is the fact that the people of Luandia, including the oppressed Asari, who Bobby Okari leads in non-violent protest, are somewhat lost in the telling of the story. We certainly come to understand the struggle of Okari and his wife Marissa but the plight of the people seems to be forgotten or downplayed in the telling.

Overall, the story was good once I got in to it and the intrigue of the politics of oil are, unfortunately for those negatively affected by our continued addiction to oil at any cost, apparent. Strictly speaking, I would not call this book a thriller or a mystery; it is a well told courtroom suspense novel.

I can only guess, having read some of the other reviews, that the claims of Patterson being "preachy" are based upon an American notion of we need oil and who cares how. I'm not a liberal and I can't claim to be an activist, but to suggest that Patterson is "preachy" when the story, though fictional, is pretty true-to-life, is an unfortunate indication of the blindness of our society to the plight of the MAJORITY of the population of our planet; I guess this paragraph makes me "preachy", but I won't apologize for that...

So, I liked it, once I got in to it, but it wasn't spectacular.

Patrick says

An interesting journey into the workings of a third world oil-rich African nation, which lets the top 1% live high on the hog while still starving every one else. The storyline, itself, was a weaker story than I am used to from Mr. Patterson. It strongly appears that the main purpose of this book was to demonstrate the misery of the 99% and the corruption and greed of the 1% - THAT it does brilliantly.

Don says

An American lawyer travels to a fictional African country to defend a civil rights/environmental activist who has likely been framed for murder. There are parts of the first 100 pages or so that are hard to read because for the grim depiction of the horrors perpetrated an African dictator. The country is oil rich which make the dictator a friend of the US. Unfortunately, the basic story is based on true events. Patterson weaves in his own details and the court proceedings are very well dramatized. Patterson is a great story teller and the story line shines a bright light on US geopolitical policy. Highly recommended
