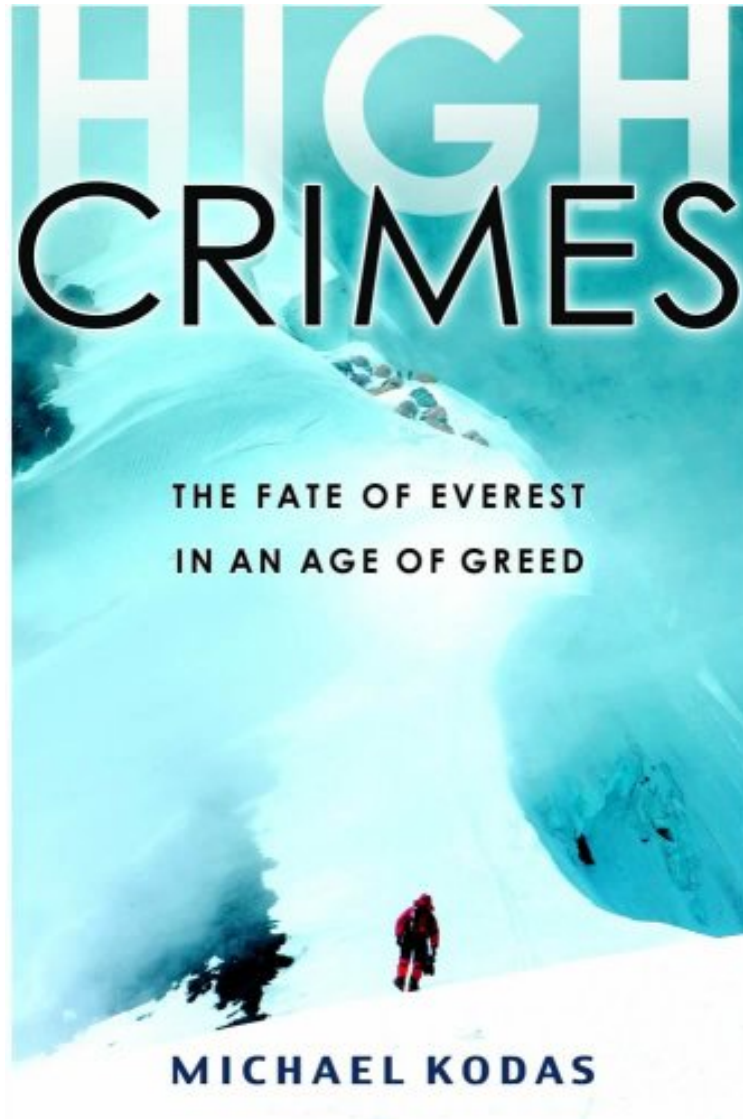


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High Crimes: The Fate of Everest in an Age of Greed

Michael Kodas

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Michael Kodas : High Crimes: The Fate of Everest in an Age of Greed before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised High Crimes: The Fate of Everest in an Age of Greed:

8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Better have a pen and paper handy reading this one...By JolieI love this type of book (Jon Krakauer's books and some I've read about the Tour de France immediately come to mind), but this one gave me a headache. It's clear that Michael Kodas put a lot of time and effort into collecting this information, but the format he chose to use is painful. In this book, he is chronicling various mideeds over a 10+ year period. There are two or three (I'm not even sure) main stories that intersect or at least run somewhat parallel, but it's impossible to

keep the characters and timelines straight with all the jumping around. It got to the point where I, who love this type of real story, wanted to toss this one. I was so confused that I just didn't care anymore. I struggled with this rating. It's well written, with no obvious typo/grammatical errors, but I don't know why his editor or publisher didn't suggest another way to tell these stories that would have been more reader-friendly or make the flow more coherent. I'm still not really sure what the "Fate of Everest" is because that wasn't really addressed in the end. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Story not well structured, hard to follow. By m This book jumps around quite a bit between the stories and personalities it uses to illustrate the author's assertion that opportunism and greed are creating an even more dangerous environment for Everest climbers. It is hard to follow the various narratives, and despite the author's believable overarching criticism, much of it focuses on the author's own attempt and it seems to lack the depth of introspection evident in Jon Krakauer's account of Everest in "In Into Thin Air." There are so many points in the book where you think, gee, dude, that wasn't enough of a red flag for you to clue in and bail out on this obviously doomed mission? But like many of those he criticizes, he has the same "summit fever" that leads him deep into denial about what is actually going on around him. There is plenty of blame he hands out to his "teammates," some of whom are obviously ethically and morally challenged, but you have to wonder how his own self-centered attitude added to the problem. You don't get the sense that there was any real examination of his own role in the bad situation he found himself in and that is disappointing, coming from someone who is clearly claiming the moral high ground. I'm 3/4 through the book and debating on whether or not to finish it, as it has become too tedious to keep track of the various people and events in the book. Had it been written less from his own point of view, and focused more on other people's experiences (and better organized), it could have been a more worthwhile read. 2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating Reading. By booknblueslady. Journalist and Everest veteran presents a picture of the great mountain as lawless and unregulated as a gold rush town in the 19th century. It is a fascinating account in which theft, fraud, negligence and mayhem are all present and accounted for. On a mountain in which the fragility of life is so evident even small crimes as sleeping in someone's tent and sleeping bag can be life threatening larger crimes can have dire consequences. As Kostas states: "Those attempting to domesticate The Goddess Mother of the Universe with ropes and satellites shouldn't be surprised that she isn't submitting gracefully to being a mere mortal's mountain." At high altitude with little oxygen the brain becomes impaired as does judgment at a time when they are both most needed. Memories blur and the mind becomes confused, reality becomes obscured. The focus becomes the summit and we find people quite willing to step past the dying in their quest for the top. Kostas explains that there are high stakes on Everest money, fame and prestige are all things which will bring out the criminal element. Selling dysfunctional oxygen containers, lying about experience, neglect and shirking responsibilities, spousal abuse, threats, assault and fraud are all detailed in High Crimes: The Fate of Everest in an Age of Greed. If you find this interesting especially with the setting of Mount Everest, this is a book you should read.

"The perfect follow-up to Krakauer's riveting account of a perfect storm."--Miami Herald "Kostas's absorbing description of the narrow moral compass governing human interaction at the top of the world is bound to shock both armchair adventurers and seasoned mountaineers."--Chicago Tribune "Kostas discovered more deceit, thievery, and double-crossing among his climbers than you find in a Martin Scorsese gangster film. High Crimes is both an adventure story and an exposé of a sport riddled with danger and corruption."--Washington Post Book World "Kostas's descriptions of the struggles confronting even the best-prepared climbers leave the reader breathless."--Dallas Morning News "[High Crimes] is hair-raising and lays bare the excitement and fear that face great explorers at the top of the world. . . . Well written, and as deftly plotted as the finest mystery novel, Kostas brings to life a disturbing picture of society at high altitude."--Austin Chronicle "Kostas does an excellent job exposing the ways in which money and ego have corrupted the traditional cultures of both mountaineers and their Sherpa guides. . . . His narrative is as hard to turn away from as a slow-motion train wreck."--Publishers Weekly High Crimes is journalist Michael Kostas's gripping account of life on top of the world--where man is every bit as deadly as Mother Nature.

From Publishers Weekly. Journalist Kostas has written a disturbing account of stupidity and greed on the slopes of Mount Everest. On assignment for the Hartford Courant in 2004, Kostas joined an expedition led by a couple who had summited the mountain more than a dozen times between them. As he moved up Everest, Kostas watched his expedition disintegrate in a mess of recriminations, thefts, lies and violence. At the same time, a sociopathic guide was leading a 69-year-old doctor to his death on the unforgiving slopes. The twin disasters led Kostas to delve into the commercialization of Mount Everest, and to discover that such experiences were becoming a depressing norm. A thorough reporter, Kostas does an excellent job exposing the ways in which money and ego have corrupted the traditional cultures of both mountaineers and their Sherpa guides. He also brings a painful focus to the delusions, misunderstandings and indifference that allow climbers to literally step over the bodies of dying people on their way to the top. Oddly enough, Kostas writes less ably about himself, and the reasons for his own expedition's collapse remain unclear; the sequencing of story lines is confusing as well. Nevertheless, his narrative is as hard to turn away from as a slow-motion train wreck. (Feb.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights

reserved. "High Crimes is both fascinating and terrifying. As someone who shies away from climbing stairs, let alone mountains, I was completely blown away by the high-stakes drama and intrigue of this Everest story. Kodas's vivid writing kept me up for two straight nights, and my heart is still racing! The story is tragic, yet somehow also uplifting-- a true masterpiece!" -- Ben Mezrich, New York Times bestselling author of *Bringing Down the House* and *Rigged*"Seeking to experience the high ambitions of an Everest climb himself, Michael Kudas found instead the little-known underworld of the world's tallest peak . . . compelling reading for anyone who thinks mountaineering is a noble pursuit." -- Greg Child, author of *Over the Edge*From the Inside FlapIn 2004, journalist Michael Kudas joined local mountain climbers from home on an expedition to Mount Everest. He anticipated an exhilarating and arduous adventure among a group of like-minded idealists that he could report to his readers back in Connecticut. But on the Himalayan mountain, he discovered thieves, prostitutes, con men, and blackmailers. There were people who would do anything for a quick buck, or a guarantee of reaching the top. And some of them were on his own team. Thieves stole equipment on which the team's lives depended, Kudas's life was threatened by one of his teammates, and a climbing partner was beaten unconscious by another in Base Camp. He returned from the Himalaya disillusioned. But a plea for help from the daughter of a mountaineer who vanished on Everest on the very day that Kudas had retreated from his own disintegrating team prompted him to return to Everest and uncover an underworld that preys on unsuspecting climbers on major peaks around the world. High Crimes is a shocking expose of the dark underside of Everest: people stepping over dying climbers on their way up; unscrupulous con men who sell faulty oxygen tanks that leave climbers without air when their lives depend on it; drugs and prostitution in Base Camp; and people all but murdered in the cutthroat race to get to the top. Illustrated with incredible photographs and written with thriller-like pacing, High Crimes is a gripping and fascinating story.