Delve Deeper into *Kingdom of Shadows*
A film by Bernardo Ruiz

This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Robert Surratt of The San Diego Public Library provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Kingdom of Shadows*.

In *Kingdom of Shadows*, Emmy®-nominated filmmaker Bernardo Ruiz takes an unflinching look at the hard choices and destructive consequences of the U.S.-Mexico drug war. Weaving together the stories of a U.S. drug enforcement agent on the border, an activist nun in violence-scarred Monterrey, Mexico, and a former Texas smuggler, the film reveals the human side of an often-misunderstood conflict. The distinct but interlocking experiences of these three individuals expose the dark corners of a human-rights crisis that has yet to be fully revealed.

**ADULT NONFICTION**

Corchado, Alfredo. *Midnight in Mexico: A Reporter’s Journey Through a Country’s Decent into Darkness*. New York, NY: The Penguin Press, 2013. In the last decade, more than 100,000 people have been killed in the Mexican drug war, and drug trafficking is a multibillion-dollar business. In a country where the powerful are rarely scrutinized, noted Mexican American journalist Alfredo Corchado refuses to shrink from reporting on government corruption, murders in Juárez, or the ruthless drug cartels.

Gibler, John. *To Die In Mexico: Dispatches from Inside the Drug War*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights, 2011. Combining on-the-ground reporting and in-depth discussions with people on the frontlines of Mexico’s drug war, *To Die in Mexico* tells behind the scenes stories that address the causes and consequences of Mexico's multibillion-dollar drug-trafficking business. John Gibler looks beyond the cops-and-robbers myths that pervade government and media portrayals of the unprecedented wave of violence and looks to the people of Mexico for solutions to the crisis now pushing Mexico to the breaking point.


Rodriguez, Teresa. *The Daughters of Juárez: A True Story of Serial Murder South of the Border*. New York, NY: Atria Books, 2007. For more than twelve years, the city of Juárez, Mexico—just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas—has been the center of an epidemic of horrific crimes against women and girls. Consisting of kidnappings, rape, mutilation, and murder, most of the atrocities have involved young, slender, and poor victims—fueling the premise that the murders are not random.

Wald, Elijah. *Narcocorrido: A Journey into the Music of Drugs, Guns, and Guerrillas*. New York, NY: Rayo, 2001. From international superstars to rural singers documenting their local current events in the regions dominated by guerilla war, Wald visited these songwriters in their homes, exploring the heartland of the Mexican drug traffic and traveling to urban centers such as Los Angeles and Mexico City. The corrido genre is famous for its hard-bitten songs of drug traffickers and gunfights, and also functions as a sort of musical newspaper, singing of government corruption, the lives of immigrants in the United States, and the battles of the Zapatista rebellion in Chiapas.

**ADULT FICTION**

Blake, James Carlos. *The Rules of the Wolfe*. New York, NY: The Mysterious Press, 2013. Eddie Gato Wolfe is a young, impetuous member of the Wolfe family of Texas gun-runners that goes back generations. Increasingly unfulfilled by his minor role in family operations and eager to set out on his own, Eddie crosses the border to work security for a major Mexican drug cartel led by the ruthless La Navaja. Eddie falls for a mysterious woman named Miranda, whom he learns too late is the property of an intimate member of La Navaja’s organization. When their romance is discovered, Eddie and Miranda are forced to run for their lives, fleeing into the deadly Sonora Desert in hope of crossing the border to safety.

Fuentes, Carlos. *Destiny and Desire*. New York, NY: Random House, 2011. Josué Nadal has lost more than his innocence: He has been robbed of his life—and his posthumous narration sets the tone for a brilliantly written novel that blends mysticism and realism. Josué tells of his fateful meeting as a skinny, awkward teen with Jericó, the vigorous boy who will become his twin, his best friend, and his shadow. Both orphans, the two young men intend to spend their lives in intellectual pursuit—until they enter an adult landscape of sex, crime, and ambition that will test their pledge and alter their lives forever.

Hawkins, Sam. *Tequila Sunset*. London: Serpent’s Tail, 2013. In *Tequila Sunset*, three people are confronted by Los Aztecas’ ruthless power: a reluctant gang member, an El Paso police officer, and a Mexican federal agent. As their paths cross with the gang and each other, they all become involved in a complex struggle...
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between law and crime, violence and order, and ultimately, life and death.

McCarthy, Cormac. No Country for Old Men. New York, NY: Knopf, 2005. One day, Llewellyn Moss finds a pickup truck surrounded by a bodyguard of dead men. A load of heroin and two million dollars in cash are still in the back. When Moss takes the money, he sets off on a chain reaction of catastrophic violence that not even the law—in the person of aging, disillusioned Sheriff Bell—can contain.

Winslow, Don. The Cartel. New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2016. It’s 2004. It’s 2004. DEA agent Art Keller has been fighting the war on drugs for thirty years in a blood feud against Adán Barrera, the head of El Federación, the world’s most powerful cartel, and the man who brutally murdered Keller’s partner. Finally putting Barrera away cost Keller dearly—the woman he loves, the beliefs he cherishes, the life he wants to lead. Then Barrera gets out, determined to rebuild the empire that Keller shattered. Unwilling to live in a world with Barrera in it, Keller goes on a ten-year odyssey to take him down.

NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Foster, Lynn V. A Brief History of Mexico. New York, NY: Facts on File, 2009. From the rise of the first civilizations of North America and continuing through the cataclysm of the Spanish conquest and the explosive revolution of Emiliano Zapata and Pancho Villa to the intensely contested presidential election of 2006, Mexico has had a vibrant and dynamic history.

Nazario, Sonia. Enrique’s Journey: The True Story of a Boy Determined to Reunite with His Mother. New York, NY: Random House, 2013. When Enrique was seven years old, his mother, a single parent faced with crippling economic difficulties in her native Honduras, migrated to the United States in hopes of securing a brighter future for her family. While her sacrifice provided important economic advantages, the separation eventually drove 17-year-old Enrique to embark on a four-month, 12,000-mile journey to reunite with her, traveling largely on the rooftops of trains into the United States as an undocumented migrant.

Somerville, Clive. The Drug Enforcement Administration. Broomall, PA: Mason Crest Publishers, 2003. The twenty-first century is an uncertain time where hostile outside forces—international terrorists, drug traffickers, and rogue states—threaten the North American way of life and the freedoms that we have so long taken for granted. This series provides an insight into the lives and daily heroisms of the many hundreds of thousands of men and women who work to make North America a safe country, both now and for the future.

Watkins, Christi. How Can Gang Violence Be Prevented? Farmington Hills, MI: Greenhaven Press, 2007. Books in this anthology series focus a wide range of viewpoints onto a single controversial issue, providing in-depth discussions by leading advocates. Articles are printed in their entirety and footnotes and source notes are retained. These books offer the reader not only a full spectrum of dissent on the subject, but also the ability to test the validity of arguments by following up on sources used as evidence.

FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

Colato Lainez, René. From North to South. San Francisco, CA: Children’s Book Press, 2010. José’s Mexican-born mother was deported to Tijuana, and as the story opens, José and his father are preparing to drive down from San Diego to see her. Their reunion is understandably joyous, and illustrator Cepeda offers several tender scenes during a visit that is all too short.

Diederich, Phillipe. Playing for the Devil’s Fire. El Paso, TX: Cinco Puntos Press, 2016. Thirteen-year-old Boli and his friends are deep in the middle of a game of marbles. An older boy named Mosca has won the prized Devil’s Fire marble. His pals are jealous and want to win it away from him. This is Izayoc, the place of tears, a small pueblo in a tiny valley west of Mexico City where nothing much happens. It’s a typical hot Sunday morning except that on the way to church someone discovers the severed head of Enrique Quintanilla propped on the ledge of one of the cement planters in the plaza and everything changes.

Hobbs, Will. Crossing the Wire. New York, NY: Harper Collins, 2006. When falling crop prices threaten his family with starvation, fifteen-year-old Victor Flores heads north in an attempt to "cross the wire" from Mexico into the United States so he can find work and send money home. But with no coyote money to pay the smugglers who sneak illegal workers across the border, Victor must struggle to survive as he jumps trains, stows away on trucks, and hikes grueling miles through the Arizona desert.

Hough, Robert. Diegos Crossing. Toronto, ON: Annick Press, 2015. A young man is on a dangerous mission that will secure his future ... or leave him dead. With all the suspense of a fast-paced movie, this gripping novel about Diego’s treacherous journey across borders, is also a moving story about a boy’s crossing into manhood.