



# In the Time of Madness: Indonesia on the Edge of Chaos

By Richard Lloyd Parry

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**In the Time of Madness: Indonesia on the Edge of Chaos** By Richard Lloyd Parry

In the last years of the twentieth century, foreign correspondent Richard Lloyd Parry found himself in the vast island nation of Indonesia, one of the most alluring, mysterious, and violent countries in the world. For thirty-two years, it had been paralyzed by the grip of the dictator and mystic General Suharto, but now the age of Suharto was coming to an end. Would freedom prevail, or was the “time of madness” predicted centuries before now at hand? A book of hair-raising immediacy and a riveting account of a voyage into the abyss, *In the Time of Madness* is an accomplishment in the great tradition of Conrad, Orwell, and Ryszard Kapuscinski.

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Between 1996 and 1999, British foreign correspondent Parry repeatedly forayed into some of the worst strife rending the islands of Indonesia, a nation emerging tumultuously from the dictatorship of General Suharto. This boldly reported, introspective account—"a book about violence, and about being afraid"—is his attempt to make sense, however incompletely, of what happened in Java, Borneo and East Timor. In Borneo, Parry saw seven decapitated heads, among other horrors, when he went to report on "an ethnic war of scarcely imaginable savagery." He witnessed the collapse of the rupiah and the 1998 mass student protests in Jakarta on the occasion of Suharto's reappointment. As the East Timorese agitated for independence from Indonesian rule, Parry ventured into the East Timor jungle to meet with rebels. And when the independence referendum soon thereafter brought Indonesia's military might down on East Timor, a Portuguese colony until 1975, Parry holed up in the U.N. compound at the vortex of the violence. He laments his self-protecting decision to leave the compound, though, comparing himself unfavorably to fearless Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski—"doused in benzene at the burning roadblocks." Holding Parry's writing to Kapuscinski's gold standard reveals it to be a little light on analysis and heavy on self-reflection, though it is clipped, vivid and honest. (*Jan.*)

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#### Review

"[A] boldly reported, introspective account . . . Clipped, vivid, and honest."

"A deeply felt account . . . his elegant, understated prose preserves a bubble of sanity amid the madness; he's particularly adept at capturing the moments when history is about to be made." -- Bryan Walsh

"If you want to know what it feels like to be asked the question, 'Do you expect to be killed tonight?' then read this terrifying testament from the epicenter of ultraviolence in Indonesia. Richard Lloyd Parry frightens and educates by turns in the best tradition of reportage." -- Aidan Hartley

"In this extraordinary book, Lloyd Parry's language, humanity, and courage are inseparable, a single strong wind of decency blowing hard against the mayhem on Earth, but given the way things are these days, and the world's flirtation with darkness, one can't help but read *In the Time of Madness* as a forecast of worse to come." -- Bob Shacochis

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**Frank Jorge:**

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