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## Robin Hood or Villain: The Social Constructions of Pablo Escobar

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ROBIN HOOD OR VILLAIN: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONS OF  
PABLO ESCOBAR

by

Jenna L. Bowley

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for a Degree with Honors  
(International Affairs/Political Science)

The Honors College

University of Maine

May 2013

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Abstract:

Pablo Escobar was a Colombian drug lord and leader of the Medellín Cartel which at one point controlled as much as 80% of the international cocaine trade. He is famous for waging war against the Colombian government in his campaign to outlaw extradition of criminals to the United States and ordering the assassination of countless individuals, including police officers, journalists, and high ranking officials and politicians. He is also well known for investing large sums of his fortune in charitable public works, including the construction of schools, sports fields and housing developments for the urban poor. While U.S. and Colombian officials have portrayed Escobar as a villain and terrorist who held the entire nation hostage, many people among the Colombian popular class admire him as a generous benefactor, like a Colombian Robin Hood. Decades of political turmoil and unprecedented violent conflict had left the Colombian lower class alienated and disenfranchised, creating the ideal conditions for a Robin Hood figure like Escobar to emerge and redistribute wealth among the poor. From the other perspective, Escobar threatened to destabilize the Colombian political and justice system and became a political target in the United States' international War on Drugs. This thesis will examine the origins of both of these social constructions, the villain and the Robin Hood, within Colombian society and politics and in regards to the criteria of the development of similar outlaw hero legends.

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## PREFACE

My fascination with Colombia began long before I started searching for an Honor's Thesis topic and before I had even heard of Pablo Escobar.<sup>1</sup> Like most Americans, my first perception of the country was that it was a land of coffee and cocaine plagued by corruption and violence. Clearly, while not entirely untrue, this stereotype represents only a vague and very incomplete image of Colombia's identity. My first significant exposure to the country came while I was in my high school Spanish class. We watched the film "María, llena eres de gracia," the story of a pregnant teenage girl who, out of desperation, turns to smuggling cocaine into the United States by swallowing dozens of pellets and carrying them inside her stomach. While reinforcing the drug-smuggling stereotype, the film was also a striking glimpse into the world of many Colombians with whom I could identify and their personal struggles that were very distinct from anything I had seen before.

In the same class, we also read short stories from Gabriel García Márquez, which I have often returned to and have become some of my favorite pieces of literature. The Colombia I saw in these works was completely different from the images I had seen in other places. García Márquez's Colombia was vibrant and alive, full of colorful personalities with a magical yet ordinary element that captivated me. Later I would learn about "magical-realism" as a genre, but at the time I was simply intrigued by the way he blended superstition and fantasy so seamlessly into depictions of day-to-day life. I was also exposed to popular Colombian music, including Shakira, who is still my personal favorite. While she was already popular in the United States for a handful of pop songs, I

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<sup>1</sup> See Appendix I: Topographic map of Colombia.

began to discover some of her less well-known music and found that I identified very strongly with her songwriting and image, especially compared with many of the popular American female artists.

Starting my first year at the University of Maine, I had two distinct ideas of Colombia. One was the violent, corrupt, drug-producing Colombia that I heard about in the news and the other was the beautiful and unique country that produced great artists and authors. In 2011, I was looking for a way to travel abroad for the learning experience and to practice my Spanish before I went for an entire semester study-abroad. I found an affordable volunteer program and booked my tickets to Bogotá for spring break. While my experience there only lasted a couple of weeks, it reinforced both perceptions I had of Colombia. I saw beautiful, mountainous landscapes, a metropolitan city full of friendly and intelligent people and experienced great music, dancing, and food during my free time. I also saw terrible poverty, crime, and dirty, dangerous slums during my volunteer work. Trying to reconcile these opposing images, I spoke with the program coordinator, Monica Sepulveda, a Colombian citizen who had studied in the United States and had been involved in international volunteer work for several years. The program she worked for in Colombia was relatively new. She told me that she had been asked years before by the organization to begin a program in Bogotá, but said that she had refused for a long time, saying she had thought it was too dangerous to bring foreigners to her country. She began to tell me about the intense violence that Colombia had experienced during the 80's and 90's while the government waged war against the powerful drug cartels. "We were like prisoners in our own country," she said. However, my question as to how and

why Colombia, of all places, had developed such a history of drug violence was still unanswered, and this is what inspired my thesis research.

Of course, one can't research drug violence in Colombia without finding Pablo Escobar's name everywhere. I was surprised to find that the central idea behind nearly every mention of him was the contradictory perception of his character as an evil, ruthless, murdering criminal and simultaneously as a benevolent, charitable "Robin Hood" figure admired to this day. That became my thesis question. Looking to Colombian politics and society as the source, I wanted to figure out how Escobar could be seen at the same time as an infamous criminal to many and a legendary hero to others.

Pablo Escobar's most famous personality traits were his extreme ruthlessness and his great generosity, as attributed to him by his enemies and admirers, respectively. Each of these traits has some evidence to support it. It is unclear exactly how many murders can be attributed to him because he employed numerous *sicarios* (assassins) to carry out his orders for him and was always careful to avoid anything that would directly link him to the crime. However, he and his associates were probably responsible for hundreds, if not thousands, of deaths, including police officers, journalists, and high-ranking officials and politicians. He also funded social programs and housing projects to benefit the poor, such as *Barrio Pablo Escobar* as it is called today, a neighborhood he had constructed in Medellín to house the poor living in the city's dump that still has nearly 13,000 residents. There he is still remembered as a great man and referred to as "Don Pablo". It was *Semana* magazine in 1983 that first described him as a "*paisa* Robin Hood," praising his charity work.



The only thing he was more famous for than his crimes or charity was his incredible wealth. By his peak he had supposedly amassed a fortune greater than the national gross domestic product of some small countries. The cartel at one point is said to have controlled 80% of the global cocaine trade. Cash was flowing in faster than it could be spent or moved; Escobar was rumored to have written off 10% each year due to rats chewing on the piles of stored cash. However, wealth and the power it brought were not enough for Escobar. He became involved in politics and was elected as an alternate congressman before being kicked out of his party for his association with drug trafficking. He campaigned vehemently against an extradition agreement with the United States, using his wealth and threats to very successfully bribe and coerce politicians and judges. This was Escobar's trademark strategy, *plata o plomo* (cash or lead). One either accepted his bribe or faced his *sicarios*. Eventually, when the Colombian government agreed to guarantee his protection from extradition, Escobar turned himself in and carried out his sentence in his own private prison. A little more than a year after entering the prison Escobar escaped, claiming the government had not upheld its side of the bargain. It would take the authorities another year and a half to finally catch up to him. In December of 1993 he was cornered in a house in Medellín and was shot and killed in the shootout while trying to escape on a rooftop.

Since his death in 1993, Escobar's legacy has inspired dozens of books and films, some aiming to show him as a monster, some defending him, and others capitalizing on the drama for entertainment, such as a Colombian TV series called *Pablo Escobar: El patrón del mal* that aired from 2009 to 2012. Today thousands visit his grave in Medellín

each year. Some are tourists taking a popular “Pablo Escobar Tour,” some come to mourn or offer respect, and others come to curse him.

This thesis will analyze the origins and development of the social constructions of Escobar’s character, as seen by those who vilify him and by those who admire him. It does not aim to be an accurate representation of Escobar as a historical figure, but an exploration of the political and social conditions in Colombia that contributed to his success as a criminal and to the development of his different social constructions. It will examine the idea of social banditry and the outlaw hero as a framework for the creation of Escobar’s Robin Hood image as well as the history of such banditry in Colombia and its sociopolitical foundation. It will also discuss the foreign policy of the United States and its involvement in Colombia as it pertains to the criminal image of Escobar. Ultimately it will demonstrate how both constructions of Escobar, the Robin Hood and the Villain, are subjective products of Colombia’s history and politics.

## PART I

### THE ROBIN HOOD ARCHETYPE

Perhaps the most famous outlaw of all time, Robin Hood of Sherwood Forest represents the standard model of the noble bandit. The details of the legend vary from source to source, but most of the important aspects of his character are always the same. He would have lived in medieval England and most versions of the story describe him as a commoner who defied the oppressive rule of corrupt authorities. After being declared an outlaw for illegally poaching the king's deer, he took to the forest where he hid away from the Sheriff who would have him executed for treason. In the process he gained a group of followers known as his Merry Men who helped him make a living by robbing rich travelers as they passed through the forest, all the while successfully evading capture. The most famous aspect of his character was that he would distribute his loot among the poor, who formed his support base and aided him. He is always portrayed as being noble, fair and courteous, despite being labeled a criminal, as he adhered to a moral code that was seen as being more just than the law of the authorities. He represented one of the commoners who struck back against the immoral, rich elite that oppressed them. He was not depicted as a violent criminal to be feared, but a symbol of justice and integrity. In fact, it was the authorities of the king, especially the Sheriff, who upheld the law that were the villains of the legend. Pablo Escobar, the infamous Medellín drug lord, has been portrayed similarly. He was declared an outlaw by the state for capitalizing on the emerging global illegal drug trade and also gained the support and protection of the popular class who benefitted from his benevolence and generosity. In a nation where the popular class felt abandoned and exploited by their government, Escobar came to

represent the commoner who took advantage of the immorality of a wealthy, drug addicted society and corrupt politicians to redistribute wealth among the poor.

Robin Hood figures, like Escobar, are archetypes, purely social constructions. The same archetype can be found in figures all over the world among diverse cultures and time periods, such as the glorified outlaws of the American west like Jesse James and Billy the Kid, or the Mexican revolutionary leader turned folk hero Pancho Villa, who was also a personal hero of Pablo Escobar. The archetype has several descriptive titles such as outlaw hero, noble robber, and the social bandit that for the purposes of this thesis will be treated as the same. Eric Hobsbawm coined the term 'social bandit' in 1959 when he first published *Primitive Rebels*, which was the first study of such figures. He described social bandits as those individuals who engage in outlaw behavior as a form of social protest and are glorified as heroes among the people they represent, distinguishing them from those outlaws simply serving their own interests. "Hobsbawm argued that the social bandit is a reality that motivates certain forms of political resistance to oppressive regimes within peasant societies."<sup>2</sup> His thesis was controversial, since many historians and other scholars disagreed that the figure of the social bandit was based in reality, arguing that historical records tend not to support the details of the legends regarding most social bandits. However, the cultural phenomenon of outlaw hero myths certainly exists, whether or not the supposed social bandits would have actually measured up to their noble counterparts of legends.

Folklorist Graham Seal in 2008 wrote an article describing what he called "the Robin Hood principle," which is a model of the way that real flesh and blood outlaws can

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<sup>2</sup> Graham Seal, "The Robin Hood principle: folklore, history, and the Social Bandit," *Journal of Folklore Research* 46.1 (2008) *Literature Resources from Gale*.

come to be represented as heroes in folk stories and legends.<sup>3</sup> He described a “series of identifiable cultural processes” that produce outlaw heroes as mythical constructions based on the similar representation of such figures in many different places, cultures and time periods. He argues that there is a “recurring framework” that produces legends when the appropriate conditions exist and twelve criteria that identify characteristics of outlaw heroes. The outlaw hero is almost always found in cultures that perceive themselves as being oppressed or unfairly exploited by a more powerful, vilified group, whether a foreign authority or a corrupt regime. The figure of the outlaw hero, almost always male, usually shares several characteristics across different legends. He is usually forced to break the law or is somehow justified in doing so by oppressive unjust forces. He always holds support and sympathy from the social group that he represents. Legends also usually attribute him with some extraordinary skill or ability and tell of how he repeatedly outsmarts the authorities trying to capture him. Even the death of the outlaw hero is prescribed; he usually dies as the result of a betrayal and always dies defiantly. Very often the legends suggest that he may have escaped at the end. Finally and perhaps most importantly, he always follows a moral code, or is at least perceived to do so. This can include behavior such as righting wrongs, settling disputes, being polite and courteous, distributing wealth among the poor, and only killing when it is perceived as being justified. The outlaw hero cannot be seen by his support base as being ruthless or cruel and typically takes action to ensure his reputation is not tarnished. “Acting honorably is not only important for the image of the outlaw, it is also vitally important to ensure the support and sympathy of his social group... The need to be seen as having a just cause and to be pursuing it honorably is one reason why outlaw heroes are often

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

prolific communicators...<sup>4</sup>

As Seal and others who have explored the topic have pointed out, the social construction of the outlaw hero is rarely an accurate historical representation of the actual individual. Outlaws that meet some of the given criteria and that operate in places where the right social conditions exist can be transformed into heroic figures by the stories told by those who support them. However, the outlaw hero absolutely must be seen as a friend of the poor. Even if he does not actually go around sharing his loot with the commoners, he must at least not hurt or steal from them. Beyond that, his social identity can be selectively constructed to fit the model. Some examples of cruelty or viciousness can be ignored and stories of the outlaw's integrity or special talents may be exaggerated or even invented.

Folklorist, Kent L. Steckmesser, argued that the social constructions of outlaw heroes, specifically those of the American west, can become very distinct from their original character, transforming the individual into a figure of legend.<sup>5</sup> Jesse James, for example, is an iconic figure of the American Wild West that became famous for robbing banks and trains. While the media of the time portrayed him as a violent and savage murderer, the "Robin Hood principle" worked to mold his identity to one befitting of an outlaw hero. As a former soldier for the Confederates during the Civil War, Jesse James's crimes against rich bankers and businessmen would have been interpreted as a sort of social rebellion against the Yankees in the north, giving his actions a noble justification. According to the legend, James displayed such honorable characteristics as sharing his loot with the poor, although there is no evidence of this. "Assignment of the Robin Hood

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Kent L. Steckmesser, "Robin Hood and the American Outlaw: A Note on History and Folklore," *The Journal of American Folklore*, Vol. 79, No. 312 (1966) JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/538043>.

tag to any American outlaw implies such an idealized character profile, and outlaws who lack these ideal traits are excluded from the tradition.”<sup>6</sup> In the social construction of an outlaw hero what matters most is not always the truth behind the historical figure, but what is believed to be true by those who perpetuate the legend.

## ESCOBAR AND THE ROBIN HOOD PRINCIPLE

Pablo Escobar, the infamous Colombian drug lord and leader of the Medellín cartel, also possesses the typical dual social identities of the modern Robin Hood figure. In some interpretations he is seen as a supremely evil murderer and terrorist who killed without mercy. In others he is a benevolent, charitable and honorable man who cared for the poor of Colombia and was unjustly demonized by the imperialist United States and Colombian elites. It is probably impossible to make an accurate judgment of his character and motivations, but there are a few certain truths about his life and image. He was identified as a criminal by the DEA and the authorities in Washington and Bogotá but he also developed a significant support base among the Colombian popular class that defended him. Escobar was also unimaginably rich. He first appeared on the *Forbes* Billionaires List in 1987 with an estimated fortune of US\$3 billion and he was featured in the next six issues as well until his death in 1993.<sup>7</sup> He had the resources to finance anything he could imagine and this gave him enormous power.

Escobar himself was a master of constructing and marketing his social image and he took advantage of both sides of his perceived identity. On one hand, he encouraged his

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Erin Carlyle, “Billionaire Drug Lords: El Chapo Guzman, Pablo Escobar, The Ochoa Brothers,” *Forbes*, March 13, 2012, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/erincarlyle/2012/03/13/billionaire-druglords-el-chapo-guzman-pablo-escobar-the-ochoa-brothers/>.

reputation as a ruthless *bandido* (bandit, outlaw) to gain power and intimidate his business and political rivals. He developed this reputation from a young age by kidnapping and killing hostages for ransom or murdering those who stood in the way of his success. He became so feared for his power and mercilessness that he was able to effectively intimidate even the highest-ranking politicians, officials and judges into cooperation.

At the same time he portrayed himself to the public as a gentle and humble friend of the poor in order to strengthen his public support base and to demonize those who would demonize him. He is still loved and admired for his generosity among the lower class of his home city of Medellín, Colombia where he constructed entire neighborhoods to house the poor and was known to walk through the slums of the city handing out cash to its inhabitants.<sup>8</sup> While there are many who say this was all an act designed to manipulate the masses into supporting him for his own benefit, many of his surviving family members and close associates also speak of him as a soft spoken and polite man, a loving father, and a faithful Christian whose altruism was very genuine. Some of Escobar's supporters claim he was a scapegoat of the imperialist U.S. and corrupt Colombian governments.

If one uses Graham Seal's criteria of outlaw hero legends outlined above, Escobar's Robin Hood persona fits nearly perfectly, at least based on what his supporters believe to be true. This interpretation tends to leave out or deny the hundreds of murders attributed to Escobar, focusing instead on his generosity and supposedly honorable nature. He rose to fame by trafficking drugs, a form of banditry. Some might argue that he was in a sense forced to do so by the unjust distribution of wealth and opportunity, imposed by the

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<sup>8</sup> Mark Bowden, *Killing Pablo* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), 31.



wealthy elite. He was known for enforcing his own sort of social justice and righting perceived wrongs as well as being fair in his business dealings. He shared with the poor and regularly outsmarted or otherwise escaped the authorities. He died defiantly in a shoot out, as is fitting for outlaw heroes, and is rumored to have escaped or taken his own life at the last minute, robbing his enemies of the satisfaction of killing him.

Using the same criteria to judge Escobar based on the construction presented by his enemies, the noble bandit image falls apart. Like Robin Hood was to the Sheriff, Escobar was seen as simply another dangerous thug, however he became an exceptionally powerful one and would take his fight against authority to another level. He was cruel and merciless, murdering dozens if not hundreds of people himself and ordering the deaths of countless others, including Supreme Court judges, Presidential candidates, journalists, and police officers. His charitable work was just a front to disguise his true criminal nature and the unprecedented violence he unleashed caused more harm to the poor than his generosity did them good. In this interpretation, the moral code of the outlaw hero is nowhere to be found.

There are aspects of both constructions of Escobar that are undeniably true and others that may be influenced by bias or exaggeration. There is not necessarily one right or wrong construction, or one that is decidedly more accurate than another. What is clear is that each construction of his character was influenced by the social, economic, political and cultural context from which it emerged. Medellín's history and the expansion of urban poverty influenced the image of Escobar was that held by the Antioqueño masses, while the elites in the Colombian government saw a different picture influenced by the image exported by Washington and its intelligence agencies.

Escobar's life and personal development as well as his social construction as Robin Hood can be explained, at least in part, by the social and political conditions in Colombia during his lifetime and decades before his birth. Escobar's own inherent personality can account for the rest. Escobar the man and Escobar the myth are both products of Colombia's violent and troubled history. During the 1930's and 40's, political and social tensions mounted until they erupted into a period widespread partisan conflict, chaos and banditry referred to simply as *la Violencia*. Successive repressive administrations did little to restore balance and the violence continued for decades, mostly in rural areas outside the central government's control. It displaced thousands of peasants, who migrated from the countryside into urban centers like Medellín, creating pockets of poverty within the city and expanding outward into slums.

Political stability was restored in 1958 when Liberal and Conservative leaders established the National Front and agreed to share the presidency by alternating each term for a sixteen-year period.<sup>9</sup> In 1961, President Kennedy initiated a program called Alliance for Progress, aimed to establish a cooperative relationship with Latin American nations to promote economic liberalization and capitalism and discourage any communist ideologies.<sup>10</sup> Colombia under the National Front would be one of the Alliance's greatest examples of success in the region and in the late 1960's the economy was growing by around 6% annually. Despite the country's economic growth, the popular class saw little improvement in their conditions. The gap between rich and poor widened even further. In 1970, the poorest half of the urban population earned less than 16% of total urban income, while the richest 10% earned over 43%. In the countryside nearly two thirds of

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<sup>9</sup> David Bushnell, *The Making of Modern Colombia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 224.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

Colombians lived in “absolute poverty.”<sup>11</sup> Most of the country’s land and wealth was held by a small percentage of the population and the large migration away from rural farms into cities created a large supply of labor relative to demand, which kept wages and overall employment low. Throughout the 1970’s the urban poor organized strikes and demonstrations demanding improved public services or supporting land and agrarian reform.<sup>12</sup> Fearing leftist agitation in the popular class, the military repressed the strikes, resulting in an unknown number of deaths and the regime’s popularity plummeting.<sup>13</sup> In line with the United States’ strong position against communism, the National Front administrations also pursued policies of strict political repression, especially of leftist political organizations that were beginning to emerge at the time.<sup>14</sup>

Escobar, born in 1949, was a child of *la Violencia* and grew up during the worst years. By the time he was an adult the violence had calmed, but it had created a generation of Colombians who were accustomed to violence and murder. Many of them, especially the lower classes, felt alienated and distrustful of the government that they saw as corrupt and unjust. This created the appropriate conditions for a Robin Hood figure to emerge, someone to steal from the rich and redistribute the wealth and power among the poor. Escobar did just that, except he did it on a global scale by funneling billions dollars away from wealthy American consumers and into to Colombia. Then the end of the Cold War in the 1980’s caused a dramatic shift in the United States’ policy towards Latin America. When the threat of communism began to fade away, it was replaced by the threat of drugs and drug traffickers. Being the most powerful drug trafficker alive,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 241; See Appendix II: Poverty in Antioquia, 2006.

<sup>12</sup> Marcos Palacios, *Between Legitimacy and Violence: A History of Colombia, 1875-2002*, trans. Richard Stoller (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 196.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 190.

Escobar became the natural enemy of the United States. What ensued was one of the most dramatic and bloody games of cops and robbers ever played, as the world's most powerful outlaw faced off against the world's most powerful sheriff.

## PART II

### ESCOBAR, A PRODUCT OF *LA VIOLENCIA*

Colombia has a long history of internal political instability and violence as well as a deeply rooted outlaw tradition. Its geographic features have always presented a challenge for central governance; rough mountainous terrain and inhospitable jungles have predisposed the nation to regional isolation and made transportation, communication and law enforcement especially difficult. Additionally, Colombia serves as a bridge between South and Central America and has access to both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Its geographic location combined with a historically weak central government and little law enforcement in remote areas has also predisposed it to criminal activities, including banditry and contraband smuggling.

Wealthy landowners in the countryside, unable to rely on the state for justice, would hire private armies to protect their property. In rural areas especially, laws were made by the elites and enforced by their paramilitaries. The concept of taking the law into one's own hands to protect one's self and deal out justice has been a trend throughout Colombia's history. However, simple thieves and smugglers only accounted for a fraction of the violent conflict in Colombia. It is the nation's centuries old problem of internal political conflict, pitting Liberals against Conservatives, that has created a long lasting atmosphere of instability and violence.

Throughout the 1900's Colombia's population was divided by party affiliation. Party loyalties were almost always inherited; young children were indoctrinated as either Liberals or Conservatives by their families and neighbors and often were taught to hate the other party. In fact, at the turn of the century the nation was fighting the Thousand

Days' War, a bloody civil conflict between the two parties that engulfed the entire country and resulted the Conservative party's dominance for decades. When the next Liberal president was elected in 1930, Liberals in the countryside took the opportunity to avenge old grudges against local Conservatives, and some Conservatives rejected the new president, inciting outbreaks of violence in many rural areas.<sup>15</sup> Similar outbreaks of fighting are all too familiar in Colombian history though. Strong tension between the parties, especially in rural areas, was the norm and even small disturbances could easily cause it to boil over into armed conflict. Successive administrations, all of them Liberal until 1946, had to contend with continuous outbreaks of violence in the countryside, although the scale of these conflicts were minor compared to what would follow. Often the violence was politically motivated but frequently resembled simple banditry.

During the 1930's and 40's, a Liberal politician named Jorge Eliecer Gaitán was gaining significant popular support. He had first become popular in the 1920's for defending workers' rights and speaking out against the oligarchic nature of Colombian politics. He came to be seen as the voice of the common people, a "hero of the peasants."<sup>16</sup> He ran for president in 1946 but lost due to a split in the Liberal party that resulted in two Liberal candidates running, allowing Conservative President Mariano Ospina Pérez to be elected. However he then assumed leadership of the reunited Liberal party and was expected by many to win the 1950 election.

Later, in 1953, Miguel Jorrín wrote in *Governments of Latin America* that "the antecedent... of the grave political problems facing Colombia may be found in the

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<sup>15</sup> Bushnell, 182.

<sup>16</sup> John D. Martz, *Colombia: A Contemporary Political Survey* (Durham: University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 43.

Presidential elections held on May 5th 1946.”<sup>17</sup> The years of partisan tension and disputes within the parties themselves had resulted in this political imbalance that would lead to a dramatic escalation in the conflict that was already widespread the Colombian countryside. The election year of 1946 is often marked as the starting point of one of the darkest moments in Colombian history, “a nightmarish period of bloodletting so empty of meaning it is simply called *la Violencia*.”<sup>18</sup> The unprecedented levels of brutal violent conflict have defied clear explanation, despite numerous investigations into its nature and causes. There were elements of partisan hatred, class conflict and political rebellion but just as much apparently senseless rape, torture and murder. One estimate indicates that around 200,000 Colombians were killed and that at least 20% of the population was directly affected between 1946 and 1966, including those who were injured or forced to flee their homes.<sup>19</sup> The typical response from the government was forceful repression, which did more to fuel the conflict than to reduce it, especially in its political dimension:

Not only did the victorious Conservatives indulge in attacks on Liberals, but in many areas the Liberals... refused to accept the legally elected although minority Conservative president and resorted to armed resistance... In reply the Conservatives began to politicize the police and the armed forces... using the forces of public order as partisan political instruments... Liberals began to form organized guerrilla bands to harass the authorities... the Conservatives in turn strengthened their hold on the police and the army and began the formation counter-guerilla of bands made up of fanatical Conservative peasants, whipped to a religious frenzy.<sup>20</sup>

Liberals, including most of the popular class, saw Gaitán as their only hope to end the persecution and violence. On April 9<sup>th</sup>, 1948, while the city of Bogotá was preparing

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>18</sup> Bowden, 11.

<sup>19</sup> Norman A. Bailey, “La Violencia in Colombia,” *Journal of Inter-American Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (1967) JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/164860>.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

to host the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference of American States, Gaitán was leaving his office to go to lunch, but he was shot and killed as he stepped onto the street.<sup>21</sup>

His assassination unleashed a wave of violence known as *el Bogotazo* that would change the course of Colombian history. His murderer was a young man named Juan Roa Sierra whose motivations remain unclear, although the immediate conclusion of the onlookers was that he was part of a plot designed by the Conservatives. The onlookers transformed into a violent mob, killing Roa and burning, looting and destroying the city. The violence carried on into the night and when the dust finally settled the city was trashed and hundreds, maybe even thousands, were dead. Unfortunately, even after the conflict died down in the capital, the violence it initiated had spread to other cities and throughout the countryside. Often the chaotic violence seemed meaningless. “The government fought paramilitaries and guerrillas, industrialists fought unionists, conservative Catholics fought heretical liberals, and *bandidos* took advantage of the free-for-all to plunder. Gaitán’s death had unleashed demons that had less to do with the emerging modern world than with Colombia’s deeply troubled past.”<sup>22</sup>

In the next election, a Conservative Laureano Gómez ran uncontested and used the powers granted to him under the state of siege to establish a civilian dictatorship. During his term levels of violence increased, which he combated with authoritarian repression by labeling all forms of political protest “banditry.”<sup>23</sup> In 1953, a coup-d’état transferred power to General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla, who was successful at first in reducing the political violence, but high levels of banditry persisted:

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<sup>21</sup> Martz, 54.

<sup>22</sup> Bowden, 11.

<sup>23</sup> Martz, 116.



When Rojas Pinilla came to power in 1953, he declared a general amnesty for all guerrillas who surrendered to government forces with their arms. Thousands of guerrillas did so, and between 1953 and 1955 *la Violencia* gradually changed character, transforming itself largely from political to economic in motivation and from guerrilla to bandit in character.<sup>24</sup>

Through kidnapping for ransom, extortion of wealthy rural landowners, and stealing crops or demanding a percentage of their proceeds these non-political bandits took advantage of the disorganized government and law enforcement for their own economic benefit.

Eventually, in a desperate effort to regain control of the country and its people, Liberal and Conservative leaders came together and formed National Front in 1958.<sup>25</sup> They agreed upon a system of sharing the presidency by alternating parties for a 16-year period. While this effectively stabilized the central government and reduced partisan violence, it did little to expand democratization to other political groups. During this time, there was still persistent armed conflict in rural regions. Leftist guerrilla organizations, such as the FARC and ELN among others, became active and began to challenge the oligarchic political system and demand political representation and legitimacy. The administrations of the National Front were harshly repressive of such leftist political movements that threatened the delicate stability that had not been present for decades. Although the violence did decrease in most places, Colombia was still deeply divided.

These anarchic and violent conditions were the backdrop to the society in which Escobar and others in his generation would grow up. The popular classes had suffered years of unprecedented violence and terror. Thousands of rural poor had been displaced and forced to migrate to urban centers, where they congregated in slums. They resented

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<sup>24</sup> Bailey.

<sup>25</sup> Bushnell, 224.

and distrusted the government that had seemingly done more to hurt them than to help them and failed to provide for them after all they had suffered. These people who felt forsaken and powerless and were accustomed to violence were the same who would find a hero in Escobar, the man who not only came from nothing and achieved wealth but who also gave it back to them. The urban poor would place the responsibilities of the state in the hands of Escobar and welcomed the paternalistic role he played.

### A HISTORY OF *BANDIDOS*

This chaotic environment, marked by violent conflict, political instability, and nonexistent or politically affiliated law enforcement had a long lasting effect on Colombian society. The citizens and peasantry harbored a deep distrust for the government and its institutions. Some of the *bandidos* who traveled the country stealing and murdering became famous; not feared for their brutality, but admired as rebels against the corrupt system. Many claimed a political motive, carrying out revenge against Liberals or Conservatives and enjoying support from the members of whichever party they affiliated themselves with. Where they operated with support from the peasants or even local leaders they were usually referred to as guerrillas, implying their struggle for a cause. The term bandit was used by the Conservative government and, later under Rojas, by the army.<sup>26</sup>

Stories of their exploits became legendary and “their crimes were seen by many common people as blows stuck against power.”<sup>27</sup> They became, in a way, icons of

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<sup>26</sup> Gonzalo G. Sánchez and Donny Meertens, “Political Banditry and the Colombian *Violencia*,” trans. Edna Gutiérrez de Moolick, in *Bandidos: The Varieties of Latin American Banditry*,” edited by Richard W. Slatta (Wesport: Greenwood Press, 1987), 157-8.

<sup>27</sup> Bowden, 13.

resistance to the powerless poor, morphing into vaguely Robin Hood-like figures, exacting revenge as they terrorized, murdered and stole from wealthy landowners and political enemies. Their names, titles like Desquite, Tirofijo, Sangrenegra, and Chispas, were well known across the nation. Even before *la Violencia*, outlaws were popular icons, such as José del Carmen Tejeiro, a *bandido* of the Thousand Day's War, who "would not just steal from wealthy landowning enemies; he would punish and humiliate them, forcing them to sign declarations such as "I was whipped fifty times by José del Carmen Tejeiro as retribution for persecuting him."<sup>28</sup> Despite their reputation for cruelty, many of the common people rooted for these outlaws as much as they feared them. They became romanticized, not unlike some American outlaws such as Jesse James or Bonnie and Clyde. With the *bandidos*, "terror became art, a form of psychological warfare with a quasi-religious aesthetic."<sup>29</sup> Torture and mutilation were commonplace, and many criminals had their own gruesome signatures. Body parts and mutilated corpses were often displayed for the rest of the world to see. "The joke Colombians told was that God had made their land so beautiful, so rich in every natural way, that it was unfair to the rest of the world; He had evened the score by populating it with the most evil race of men."<sup>30</sup> Unlike the social bandit in the classic sense, these *bandidos* did not actively promote a positive image of themselves among their peasant bases. "The bloody ambience and terror of the Violencia, on the contrary, did not lend itself to this type of romantic frivolity... Acts of violent terrorism were justified as righteous vengeance against representatives of the opposing party..."<sup>31</sup> Even when many of them came to see

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>31</sup> Sanchez and Meertens, 165.

themselves as defenders of their people, they did not try to hide or diminish their reputations for cruelty to foster an honorable image. Instead, it was their notoriety for violence that perpetuated the development of the popular myths.

Efraín González, also known as “*El Siete Colores*” (Seven Colors), was a Conservative *bandido* who was supposedly responsible for 128 murders. One of his legendary skills was the ability to turn himself into a black cat to elude the authorities. When he was a child he moved to Quindío after his mother was killed by liberal guerrillas, justifying his lifelong hatred for the party. He was known for being a devoted Catholic, a point regularly expressed in the press, and was said to dress as a priest when committing his worst crimes. A senator who defended him in Congress once referred to him as the Robin Hood of Boyacá, where he was asked to help defend the emerald mines and the peasants. In 1965 he was finally killed on a rooftop in Bogotá by a force of 200 soldiers sent to capture him. After his death crowds of people came to the house where he was shot to publicly demonstrate support for him, placing a small altar adorned with a cross and image of the Virgin in front of the doorway.<sup>32</sup>

Teófilo Rojas, also known by his alias “Chispas,” was a Liberal *bandido* and a natural enemy of Efraín González. As the story goes, he joined a group of liberal guerrillas when he was twelve years old after witnessing the murder of his relatives and neighbors at the hands of the *chulavitas*, the Conservative political police under the Ospina Pérez’s administration. He stood out for his charisma and bravery and was given important missions, despite his young age. He and the other liberal guerrillas accepted the amnesty offer put forward by the Rojas regime, but was forced back into fighting when peasants in Quindío came to request his protection from the *chulavitas*, then under

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<sup>32</sup> Claudia Steiner, “Un bandolero para el recuerdo,” *Antípoda* N°2, Universidad de los Andes (2006).

command of Sergeant Oliverio Moya Lagos. Chispas and his men destroyed the police force that had been terrorizing the peasants. In 1958, he again expressed the desire to be pardoned and to return to his farming life, but the government was slow to grant him amnesty. The next year the peasants of Quindío called to him for help again, this time for protection from conservative *bandidos*, including Efraín González. Quindío was overrun with bloodshed as the liberal and conservative gangs clashed against one another. Finally, in January of 1962 as a result of a push from the government to end banditry and violence, Chispas was killed by the army.<sup>33</sup>

Like González and Chispas, there were hundreds of other local and regional Robin Hoods throughout Colombia, especially in the more remote regions where the violence was the worst. Medardo Trejos Ladino, alias Capitán Venganza (Captain Revenge), operated in the municipality of Quinchía, in Risaralda. His liberal gang prohibited any police from entering his zone of control and fought against the *chulavitas*, with the intention of eliminating all conservatives from the region.<sup>34</sup> Jacinto Cruz Usma, alias Sangrenegra (Blackblood), was known for his gruesome signature, the “corte de flanela,” which consisted of slitting the victim’s throat and pulling the tongue out through the opening.<sup>35</sup> Most *bandidos* were eventually killed or captured by the army, but a few continued and became leaders of leftist guerrilla groups, such as Pedro Antonio Marín,

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<sup>33</sup> Johnny Delgado M., “El caso ‘Chispas’,” *El espectador*, January 20, 2013, <http://www.elespectador.com/noticias/judicial/articulo-397562-el-caso-chispas>.

<sup>34</sup> Alfredo Cardona Tobón, “La República del Capitán Venganza,” *Historia y Región*, February 28, 2011, <http://historiayregion.blogspot.com/2011/02/la-republica-del-capitan-venganza.html>.

<sup>35</sup> “Vida de Sangrenegra, uno de los bandoleros más buscados de la década del 50 será llevada al cine,” *El tiempo*, May 31, 2007, <http://www.eltiempo.com/archivo/documento/CMS-3577452/>.

aliases Manuel Marulanda Vélez and Tirofijo (Sureshot) who was the commander of the FARC until his death in 2008.<sup>36</sup>

Press censorship at the time prevented the news from reporting all of the details; most of the stories about the *bandidos* were compiled years later based on oral tradition and some official reports, both of which would be biased towards one representation or another. Like the original Robin Hood legend, the popular identities of these *bandidos* are constructions based on subjective interpretations that turn reality into something that is probably closer to myth. Escobar admired the famous *bandidos* he grew up hearing stories about and began to emulate them. His figure represents a more contemporary version of the *bandido*, urban and capitalist but still stemming from the same culture of violence.

## MEDELLÍN AND THE BEGINNING OF THE DRUG TRADE IN COLOMBIA

In colonial times, Medellín was Colombia's mining center. The people called themselves *paisas*. Being isolated by geography, they developed a distinct culture, as well as a tradition of smuggling. "Outwardly modest, they were an aggressive, ambitious people, hard workers with hard heads who coveted money and social position."<sup>37</sup>

Colonists from Bogotá found the *paisas* to be backwards and crude, mostly *contrabandistas*, mocking their strange accents and looking down at their lack of sophistication. However, by Escobar's time, Medellín had developed into an attractive, modern city and the *paisas* were creative, cunning businessmen. Raised to be ambitious,

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<sup>36</sup> "Las FARC confirman la muerte de Manuel Marulanda," *Noticias 24*, May 25, 2008, <http://www.noticias24.com/actualidad/noticia/14563/telesur-confirma-muerte-de-marulanda/>.

<sup>37</sup> Guy Gugliotta and Jeff Leen, *Kings of Cocaine* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989), 21.

sons were encouraged to become independent and wealthy. “‘If you succeed, send money,’ went an old *paisa* saying. ‘If you fail, don’t come home’”.<sup>38</sup>

In the 1970’s, Medellín was already home to organized crime syndicates that made their money smuggling various kinds of contraband, including narcotics. Marijuana had been around for some time, but cocaine had not been especially common in Colombia. Before 1973, most cocaine was produced in Chile, using coca leaves from Peru and Bolivia, and Colombian smugglers were the link to the United States. While the Chileans profited nicely, the market for cocaine was still not very big, so the industry remained small. However, in 1973, when General Augusto Pinochet took control of Chile, he effectively ended the cocaine business there.<sup>39</sup> The Colombians took over the trade at just the right time. They had the same easy access to coca leaves from Peru and Bolivia, little trouble from law enforcement, and they already had established smuggling routes used to transport marijuana. Cocaine, however, was even easier to move because it was less bulky, less smelly and turned a higher profit.

The logistics of cocaine trafficking were already in place when the drug started to become very popular in the United States. Suddenly, in the late 1970’s, cocaine was fashionable. It was the drug of choice for young, hip party-goers, and it was everywhere. Demand for the drug exploded, and the Colombians were in the perfect position to fill that order. The Colombian drug traffickers had little to worry about from the authorities who could be easily bribed. In urban centers like Medellín, the popular class neighborhoods had expanded and the city was full of reckless, low class Colombian youth, like Pablo Escobar, who had few opportunities and were looking for a path to

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 22.

success.<sup>40</sup> Medellín had higher rates of unemployment than Bogotá and Cali, especially among the youth who were often recruited to work as drug smugglers or *sicarios* for the expanding drug cartels.<sup>41</sup>

## PABLO ESCOBAR'S EARLY LIFE

Escobar was born December 1, 1949 in a rural town called Rionegro. His mother, Hermilda, was a schoolteacher, and his father Abel farmed. Although later he would depict his upbringing as poor and humble, by Colombian standards at the time his family was comfortably middle-class and Liberal. However, *la Violencia* was never far from their lives. Alonso Salazar, author of *La Parábola de Pablo*, recounts an event that shows just how close Escobar's childhood was to the terror of *la Violencia*. His mother, Hermilda had moved their family to a tiny village in Titiribí, a municipality of Antioquia, to teach at a school there. However, the conservatives of the town were enraged at the thought of a Liberal woman indoctrinating their children with her ideologies. They attacked in the night and tried to burn down the small schoolhouse where the family had taken shelter. Hermilda prayed to Niño Jesús de Atocha for protection, and miraculously the mob outside was unable to penetrate or set fire to the building. The army arrived in the early hours to disperse the mob and the morning showed the devastation left behind:

Upon stepping outside they saw something that they would never forget: liberal peasants hung by their feet from the school's crossbeams and decapitated with a machete. The blood, dark and thick, covered the hallway and stuck to their feet. The army recommended they flee immediately, without even gathering their

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<sup>40</sup> See Appendix III: Socioeconomic Strata in Medellín, 1997.

<sup>41</sup> Christopher Abel, "Colombia and the Drug Barons: Conflict and Containment," *The World Today*, Vol. 49, No. 5 (May, 1993) JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/40396505>; In 1992, unemployment in Medellín was at 12.1%, compared to 9% and 7.3% in Cali and Bogotá, respectively.



clothes, and escorted them some two hours until they arrived at the town, from where they continued alone on the way to the train that would carry them back to Medellín.<sup>42</sup>

They moved to Envigado, a suburb of Medellín. Hermilda promised to build a chapel devoted to el Niño de Atocha that Escobar would have constructed for her.

Growing up, Escobar was not too different from his classmates. He liked soccer and fast food and popular music, but his charisma and ambition set him apart from his peers. Hermilda said that as a young child he always told her that he “[wanted] to be big.”<sup>43</sup> He reportedly swore to his friends that if he did not have a million pesos by the time he was thirty he would kill himself. He did well in school with little difficulty and at age thirteen he was elected president of his school’s Council for Student Wellness, where he fought for support for transportation and food for poor students. At the same time, he was introduced to revolutionary leftist ideologies. “He learned a series of anti-imperialist and anti-oligarchic phrases that he would repeat for the rest of his life... He wanted to be leftist but rich.”<sup>44</sup>

He had a vain streak too. He took to carrying a comb in his pocket and was known to check his reflection in windows as he passed by.<sup>45</sup> Later, after amassing his fortunes, he liked have his picture taken dressed up as the famous gangsters and *bandidos* that he idolized, like Pancho Villa and Al Capone.<sup>46</sup> “He wanted to be a *bandido*,” said one of

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<sup>42</sup> Alonso Salazar, *Pablo Escobar, el patron del mal* (Doral: Santillana, 2012), 42-43. Quote translated here by writer.

<sup>43</sup> Bowden, 17.

<sup>44</sup> Salazar, 35, translated here by writer.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 36.

<sup>46</sup> See Appendix VII: Photograph.

his associates, Popeye, for the documentary, *Pablo Escobar: Ángel o demonio*, “he told me, ‘I was everything I wanted to be, a *bandido*.’”<sup>47</sup>

Escobar’s maternal grandfather, Roberto Gaviria, became the mayor of his town, but before that even he was a *contrabandista* (smuggler). Hermilda would proudly tell stories about how he so intelligently outsmarted the authorities. He would travel all the way to Urabá, near the border with Panamá, to buy whiskey. He would carry the whiskey back in a coffin accompanied by four men and women dressed in black posing as mourners. They would bury the coffin in the cemetery, then return at night to collect their cargo. One day, someone alerted Roberto that someone had told the authorities about his scheme. However, he went out as usual and brought back his coffin. During the fake burial ceremony, they arrived to arrest him for smuggling contraband, but Roberto denied any wrongdoing. When they opened the coffin they found it was full of rocks and determined that he was no *contrabandista*, just a crazy old man.<sup>48</sup>

As a teenager, Escobar developed a marijuana habit that he would continue for the rest of his life. He would sleep in until the early afternoon and spend most of the day and night stoned. He was always chubby and smoking weed and eating junk food kept him that way. “He looked out at the world through big, heavy-lidded hazel eyes and cultivated the bemused boredom of the chronic doper.”<sup>49</sup> He started hanging out in bars at night in the rougher parts of town with his cousin Gustavo Gaviria and committing petty street crimes for cash and for fun. “His turn to crime appears to have been

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<sup>47</sup> Popeye [pseudo.], *Pablo Escobar, ángel o demonio*, Directed by Jorge Granier (2007; Cineplex, 2011), Web. Statement translated here by writer.

<sup>48</sup> Salazar, 37.

<sup>49</sup> Bowden, 17.

motivated as much by ennui as ambition.”<sup>50</sup> Escobar was just another hoodlum chasing the ‘paisa dream’ of wealth and social position, but preferring illegal methods over hard work. What set him apart was his ambition and ruthlessness. He began running street scams, selling contraband cigarettes and fake lottery tickets. He was quite successful and he became well known for his confidence and recklessness.

He was exceptionally daring. Maybe it was the dope, but Pablo discovered in himself an ability to remain calm, deliberate, even cheerful when others grew frightened and unsteady... On several occasions as a youth, Pablo later boasted, he had help up Medellín banks by himself with an automatic rifle, bantering cheerfully with the clerks... That kind of recklessness and poise is what distinguished Pablo from his criminal peers and made him their leader.<sup>51</sup>

He expanded his criminal activity into stealing cars, sometimes in broad daylight by pulling the driver out of the stopped vehicle, and selling it for parts. He and his gang could quickly turn a profit without leaving any evidence of a crime. Soon Escobar could bribe municipal officials for new documents for the stolen cars and simply resell them whole. He even found a way to make money off cars he didn’t steal, by selling protection from his own car thieves, demonstrating an effective but shrewd knack for generating income.<sup>52</sup>

Soon he would move on to bigger crimes, including kidnapping, murder, and drug trafficking. His business grew too, until he was raking in such enormous profits that he could afford literally anything that money could buy, including loyalty. Escobar’s lifestyle, as well as that of many of the other successful drug traffickers, was unbelievably extravagant. He built an estate on a 7400 acre ranch he called Hacienda Los Nápoles where he had his own private airport, among other luxuries. He imported

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 20.

hundreds of exotic animals like lions, elephants and buffaloes. Among his collection of outlaw memorabilia was the car full of bullet holes that he claimed once belonged to Bonnie and Clyde.<sup>53</sup> He would entertain his friends by playing on his own soccer field or hiring beautiful women to participate in erotic, often bizarre, games.<sup>54</sup> Whatever he couldn't buy with cash, he got with threats. His cold-blooded reputation and power preceded him; no one took his threats lightly. What Escobar wanted, He got one way or another.

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<sup>53</sup> "In Medellín, walls do not a prison make: Pablo Escobar, the world's most wanted man," *The Independent*, August 8, 1992. <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/profile-in-medellin-walls-do-not-a-prison-make-pablo-escobar-the-worlds-most-wanted-man-1539076.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Bowden, 26.

## PART III

### DEVELOPMENT OF ESCOBAR'S CRIMINAL AND BUSINESS PERSONA

As Escobar began to develop as a criminal and businessman, he needed to be sure that he was respected and feared. All of his rivals and associates needed to know that he was powerful and capable of anything, not someone to be messed with or scoffed at. He began to develop and encourage his reputation for ruthlessness and violence. Kidnapping for ransom was his primary method of debt collection for anyone who thought they did not need to take him seriously. He would recruit people to carry out the kidnappings for him, always sure to keep some level of anonymity so that the crimes couldn't be directly traced back to him. If he was not paid the money he was owed, he did not hesitate to have the victim killed. "Sometimes the victim was killed *after* the ransom was paid, just to make a point."<sup>55</sup> Ordering people to carry out murders never seemed to affect Escobar's conscience. It was just part of the business and he became very good at using it to his advantage.

In 1971, still early in his development, Escobar demonstrated another facet to his criminal persona that would become vital to his career; that was an aptitude for influencing his public image by enforcing his own sort of social justice. Diego Echavarría was a wealthy Conservative factory owner in Envigado. He was strongly disliked by many of the lower class workers, who were being laid off and evicted from their homes as men like Echavarría were expanding their property holdings. That summer, he was kidnapped and held for US\$50,000 ransom, which his family paid. However, his body was found weeks later in a hole in the ground, not far from where Escobar lived at the time. Although there was no direct evidence linking Escobar to the crime, it was widely

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<sup>55</sup> Bowden, 20.

attributed to him and he made no effort to deny his involvement. The poor workers, now living in the slums after being stripped of their homes, began to refer admiringly to Escobar as “El Doctor,” and he became a sort of local legend. From the beginning, Escobar had a gift for getting the public on his side. He liked to see himself as “a people’s don,” a respectable and admirable figure, despite what his business activity would suggest.<sup>56</sup>

The transition to drug trafficking was only natural for someone in Escobar’s position. In 1976, Escobar was arrested with his cousin Gustavo crossing the border from Ecuador with thirty-nine pounds of cocaine after someone had supposedly tipped off the DAS (Departamento Administrativo de Seguridad). Escobar had been arrested before and served short prison terms, but this was a much more serious charge. The judge appointed to his case was Mariela Espinosa. When she refused Escobar’s bribes, a little background research revealed that the judge had a strained relationship with his brother who was a lawyer. Escobar hired the brother to represent him, correctly predicting that the judge would step down from his case. The new judge proved more easily swayed by bribes and Escobar and the others were freed. While an appellate judge tried to have Escobar rearrested and tried in a fair court, the process was delayed by appeals, and within a year the two DAS agents that had arrested him were found murdered. “Pablo was establishing a pattern of dealing with the authorities that would become his trademark. It soon became known simply as *plata o plomo*. One either accepted Escobar’s *plata* or his *plomo*.”<sup>57</sup> He did not forget Mariela Espinosa either. Although he did not have her assassinated, he condemned her to traveling on foot for the rest of her life; whenever she bought a new car,

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 24.

it was stolen, pushed off a cliff, or burnt.<sup>58</sup> The strategy proved to be very effective since it was so well enforced. Years later, when Escobar had declared all out war on the government in his campaign to force the outlawing of extradition, he had killed so many judges and their family members that new judges would refuse to take his cases. Charges would be immediately dropped or files on his cases would disappear as judges and police chiefs tried to stay out of his crosshairs.

As his drug trafficking business expanded, his profits went through the roof. Escobar was able to buy control of the business from growers and processors and pay for protection. Few law enforcement officials were eager to resist, considering their two options were typically to profit from bribes or to be murdered. Escobar even allowed small shipments to be intercepted, provided the majority got through, to make it look like the law enforcement was doing its job and to avoid suspicion. The profits more than made up for the losses. “Between 1976 and 1980 bank deposits in Colombia’s four major cities more than doubled. So many illegal American dollars were flooding the country that the country’s elite began looking for ways to score its share without breaking the law. President Alfonso López Michelsen’s administration permitted a practice... which allowed unlimited quantities of dollars to be converted to Colombian pesos... The government played along by turning a blind eye.”<sup>59</sup>

The money attracted attention from others looking to profit from their success. On November 13, 1981, Jorge Luis Ochoa told Escobar that his sister, Marta Nieves had been kidnapped. The Ochoa family, with the other brothers Fabio and Juan David and their father Fabio Ochoa Restrepo, was highly respected and a long-time partner in the

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<sup>58</sup> Salazar, 60.

<sup>59</sup> Bowden, 25.

drug business. She was being held ransom for twelve million dollars by the M-19, a leftist guerrilla group. Escobar had already established a relationship with some members of the group and took their action against his business partners as a personal offense, one that he would not stand for. He held a meeting at Hacienda Nápoles attended by 200 drug traffickers from across the country, including his associate Carlos Lehder who had once escaped a kidnapping attempt from the same guerrilla group. They announced the formation of their own paramilitary organization, *Muerte a Secuestradores* (Death to Kidnappers), by dropping leaflets from airplanes over soccer stadiums that promised retaliation and included photos of M-19's leaders, although Escobar and many others remained anonymous. They gathered a thousand men to work in collaboration with police and military forces to hunt down the M-19 and within a couple months had killed 400 guerrillas as well as their friends and family members. After the total assault on the organization Marta Nieves was released February 16, 1982. With her release, MAS freed twenty guerrillas they still held captive and paid the M-19 more than one million dollars.<sup>60</sup> Escobar had demonstrated just how powerful he was and re-established a relationship with the organization where he was dominant. Additionally, in the eyes of some Colombians, fighting the leftist guerrillas legitimized the drug traffickers.<sup>61</sup> At the time the guerrillas seemed like a larger threat than the *narcos* who in a way defended the social order. After all, the vast majority of cocaine was being consumed in the United States; Colombians were only seeing the profits.

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<sup>60</sup> Salazar, 81-7.

<sup>61</sup> Bowden, 33.



## DEVELOPMENT OF ROBIN HOOD IMAGE AND POLITICAL CAREER

Escobar became a popular local figure after the death of Echavarría, but the creation of his social image, especially among the poorest citizens, was just getting started. In 1976, shortly before his first cocaine bust, he married María Victoria Henao, much to the dismay of her family since she was only fifteen at the time.<sup>62</sup> The next year his first son, Juan Pablo, was born.<sup>63</sup> He would later change his name and move to Argentina to escape his father's legacy. He never failed to provide for his family and friends, sharing his enormous wealth with everyone around him. Nothing was more important to him than his family and he is remembered as a caring father. He was known to hide away from his children when he smoked his joints.<sup>64</sup> Years later, according to statements from Juan Pablo, when on the run from authorities, he burned stacks of cash worth US\$2 million in order to keep his daughter, Manuela, warm at night.<sup>65</sup>

Escobar dedicated himself and his overflowing resources to establishing civic development programs aimed to alleviate the suffering of Medellín's poor. His first project was *Civismo en Marcha*,<sup>66</sup> a radio show and civic welfare program that he began in 1979 with his uncle, Hernando Gaviria. It worked to plant trees along avenues, build and develop sports facilities and established a medical office for low-income individuals. He constructed lighting towers in around one hundred soccer fields and was always present at their inaugurations. His uncle's newspaper, *Medellín Cívico*, published stories of their work under the title "In the public neighborhoods night became day." The issue

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<sup>62</sup> Salazar, 58.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>65</sup> Gerard Couzens, "Colombian druglord Pablo Escobar 'burned £1.2million in cash to keep his daughter warm during single night on the run,'" *MailOnline*, November 3, 2009.  
<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1224904/Colombian-druglord-Pablo-Escobar-burned-1million-cash-daughter-warm-single-night-run.html>.

<sup>66</sup> See Appendix VIII: Photograph.

contained an eloquently crafted statement from Escobar, as was typical of his public rhetoric:

Me angustió siempre ver en los barrios populares a los niños a jóvenes exponiendo su vida al correr detrás de un balón por las calles cruzadas de raudos automotores —decía Pablo— Soñaba con el día en que esta juventud tuviera estadios propios para poder jugar sin humillarse ante nadie ni exponerse a un accidente. Así nació mi vocación por la creación de los campos deportivos. Hoy construimos canchas para fútbol, basketball, voleibol y polideportivos, ojalá mañana podamos extender nuestra acción para campos de béisbol, para piscinas y gimnasios a montón, para el pueblo.<sup>67</sup>

Escobar's most famous civic program was *Medellín sin tugurios* (Medellín without slums), which included the construction of *Barrio Pablo Escobar*. The slum neighborhood of Moravia was built around a dump. Its inhabitants lived among the mountains of trash, picking scrap items out of the refuse dumped by the garbage trucks. Escobar was disgusted and appalled at the conditions the people were living in. Only a few days after his first encounter there, the neighborhood caught fire, destroying the decrepit houses. He immediately went about organizing a plan and soon announced that he would build a thousand houses for the inhabitants.<sup>68</sup>

*Barrio Pablo Escobar* still exists today, housing 12,700 people in 2,800 homes. Its residents are Escobar's most fervent admirers who remember him as a hero and savior. A mural is painted on the side of a building, featuring Escobar's face and reading "Welcome to Barrio Pablo Escobar. Here there is peace."<sup>69</sup> More images of Escobar are

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<sup>67</sup> Salazar, 78. "It distressed me to always see in the public neighborhoods children and youth risking their lives running after a ball in the streets with vehicles racing through," said Pablo. "I used to dream of the day that these youth would have their own stadiums to be able to play without lowering themselves before anyone nor risk and accident. Thus was born my calling to the construction of sports fields. Today we build fields for soccer, basketball, volleyball and sports centers, hopefully tomorrow we may extend our action to many more baseball fields, to swimming pools and gymnasiums, for the people."

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 80.

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix V: Photograph.

spray painted on walls and buildings with the caption “San Pablo” (“Saint Pablo”).<sup>70</sup> For the documentary, *Pablo Escobar: ángel o demonio*, one woman who lives in the *barrio* was interviewed. She showed the filmmakers a framed image of Escobar, explaining that the two people she admires most are her mother who gave her life and Escobar who gave her a home. She calls him her husband because she says he was the only man who ever provided for her.

Escobar had developed a public relationship with the Catholic Church, which supported his social programs. His housing project had the blessing of the Church and he was known walk around the slums accompanied by two priests. He would also donate money to build roads and electrical lines, effectively investing more in his community than the government did. Sometime when he made public appearances in the slums, for the inauguration of a new project for example, he would hand out cash to the residents.<sup>71</sup> When speaking publicly or to the media, he would often highlight his humble generosity, his connection to the popular class, and his patriotism:

En 1968 me vinculé a la Junta Cívica de mi barrio. Muchas veces he echado pico y pala alegre y sudoroso. Desde pequeño tuve la obsesión por las escuelas, tal vez porque soy hijo de una abnegada educadora que ama su profesión. Cuando ayudamos a construir escuelas parece que nos reencontráramos con la patria que anhelamos. Hemos visto con dolor a muchos niños sentados sobre adobes, en locales destartalados, y a los maestros viviendo sin ninguna protección ante la indiferencia del Estado. Queremos a Colombia y ahora que estamos en capacidad de devolverle algo de lo que nos ha dado esta bella patria, lo estamos haciendo.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> See Appendix VI: Photograph.

<sup>71</sup> Bowden, 29-32.

<sup>72</sup> Salazar, 79. “In 1968 I joined my neighborhood’s Civic Board. Many times I have driven pick and shovel cheerful and sweaty. Since I was little I was obsessed with schools, perhaps because I am the son of a selfless educator who loves her profession. When we help to build schools it seems that we reencounter the nation that we long for. He have looked with pain upon children sitting on adobes, in ramshackle locales, and upon teachers living without any protection before the indifference of the State. We love Colombia and now that we are capable of giving back some of what this beautiful nation has given us, we are doing it.”

He used his popularity to gain an audience for his campaign against extradition, hosting a forum where he denounced the treaty Colombia had signed with the United States in 1979, claiming it violated Colombia's national sovereignty.<sup>73</sup> When Escobar began campaigning for election to public office, this would be his primary agenda. He began consciously and thoroughly scrubbing his record, trying to remove any evidence linking him to illegal activities. He hired publicists to cultivate his public image as a benevolent and generous friend of the poor and paid journalists to write stories that shed him in the best light possible. He made extensive use of his uncle's newspaper to distribute positive representations of himself:

"Yes I remember him," one Escobar admirer said in its pages. "His hands, almost priestlike, drawing parabolas of friendship and generosity in the air. Yes I know him, his eyes weeping because there is not enough bread for all the nation's dinner tables. I have watched his tortured feelings when he sees street children – angels with out toys, without a present, without a future."<sup>74</sup>

In April of 1983, *Semana* magazine, one of Colombia's most prominent publications, published a story on Escobar titled "A *paisa* Robin Hood",<sup>75</sup> featuring his passion for social improvement, his collection of exotic animals and his campaign against extradition. "Who is Don Pablo, this sort of *paisa* Robin Hood, that arouses so much excitement among hundreds of wretches that reflect in their faces a sudden hope that is not easy to explain in the midst of this sordid environment."<sup>76</sup> The article spoke of his enormous wealth, citing that an "important north American magazine" had listed him

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<sup>73</sup> Bowden, 32.

<sup>74</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 97.

<sup>75</sup> See Appendix IX: Photograph.

<sup>76</sup> "'Un Robin Hood paisa': El primer artículo sobre Pablo Escobar," *Semana*, May 29, 2012, <http://www.semana.com/nacion/articulo/un-robin-hood-paisa-el-primer-articulo-sobre-pablo-escobar/258650-3>. Quotes translated here by writer.

among the five richest people in the world with a value of around US\$5 billion, “whose origin never ceases to be an object of speculation.”<sup>77</sup>

With no public suspicion about his drug trafficking business, his previous arrests long forgotten in the piles of old records, Escobar’s popularity was soaring. In 1978 he was elected to a substitute position on the Medellín city council. In 1980 he supported the creation of the New Liberal Party, lead by a popular progressive politician named Luis Carlos Galán. In 1982, on the New Liberal Party ticket, he was elected as an alternate to Envigado representative Jairo Ortega. Although it was just a substitute position, he was a congressman nonetheless. He received automatic judicial immunity, meaning he could not be prosecuted under Colombian law, as well as a diplomatic visa, which allowed him to travel to the United States where he bought a mansion in Miami.<sup>78</sup>

Galán’s party, on one hand, seemed like a natural fit for Escobar. He was outspoken against corruption and the political oligarchy and was popular among the lower class as a reformer, a position that Escobar could have identified with. On the other hand, he also publicly denounced the drug traffickers and any politician who accepted their money or support, which at the time didn’t leave many with clean hands. Escobar himself was believed to have contributed to both Belisario Bentacur’s and Gabriel Turbay’s campaigns for president in 1978.<sup>79</sup> Perhaps Escobar thought he could go on hiding the elephant in the room indefinitely.

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Bowden, 30-31.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 30.

## PART IV

### WASHINGTON'S CONSTRUCTION OF ESCOBAR

For a long time the typical Colombian position on drug trafficking seemed to be quietly tolerant. Not only did the traffickers bring in billions of dollars that they invested in Colombia,<sup>80</sup> they also appeared to function as a buffer against the leftist guerrilla organizations that aimed to upend the status quo. They represented the aspirations of many Colombians who felt alienated and abandoned by the oligarchy; the traffickers had been born with nothing and climbed their way to the top. After all, some of Colombia's wealthiest and most prominent families had won their fortunes by illegal means, smuggling gold, emeralds or tobacco, trading slaves, or seizing properties during the civil wars and conflicts of the past two centuries. Some simply saw cocaine as a new export, one that transferred wealth from north to south on a massive scale. Alberto Villamazar, Colombia's first Anti-Kidnapping Chief, later said, "I think that in the beginning of the 80's Colombian society was very permissive of drug trafficking... It was seen more like an almost folkloric phenomenon... People were having a lot of fun."<sup>81</sup> The traffickers represented a new social class, one that was young, rich, and fashionable.

Most politicians were not eager to tackle the drug issue since many of them were getting a slice of the profits too. President Gabriel Turbay Ayala, a Liberal elected in 1978, was widely suspected of accepting money from the traffickers. However, he did cooperate with the United States' anti-drug efforts, which were then mostly aimed at the eradication of marijuana but by that time marijuana cultivation was already gradually being replaced by coca. Colombian traffickers had discovered that cocaine was far more

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<sup>80</sup> Bushnell, 261. (In the mid-80's cocaine exports were estimated to make up 3% of Colombia's GDP.)

<sup>81</sup> *Pablo Escobar, ángel o demonio*. Statement translated here by writer.

profitable and easier to transport, plus more marijuana was being grown within the United States, reducing the overall demand.<sup>82</sup> Still, the U.S. interference was very unpopular among most Colombians and so was the extradition treaty that Turbay signed in 1979.

President Belisario Betancur, elected in 1982, was notably silent on the drug issue during the first part of his term. His primary agenda was to seek peace with Colombia's notorious guerrillas, his second was to begin a program of economic and social reforms particularly aimed at improving housing and education. "Drug trafficking hardly made Betancur's list. It was a back-burner item, of concern largely because it bothered the gringos so much. Betancur was very against drug trafficking when he thought about it, but he didn't think about it very often." He also stated that he was "philosophically opposed" to extradition of Colombian nationals.<sup>83</sup> Nationalists like Betancur saw the United States' pushing of the extradition agenda as an example of imperialist policies and an infringement of Colombia's sovereignty.

During the 1970's even the United States wasn't terribly concerned with the drug issue. Its primary concern in Latin America during the Cold War era was the containment of communism. Regarding this issue, the two countries shared a warm relationship; Colombia, unlike many Latin American nations, had effectively controlled the expansion and influence of leftist ideologies through the National Front policies that kept political power in the hand of the elites. It welcomed U.S. assistance in combating the leftist guerrillas and the United States saw Colombia as a reliable and valuable ally against communism in the region. The drug issue was only one of many elements of US-

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<sup>82</sup> Bushnell, 260.

<sup>83</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 99.

Colombian relations. Viron P. Vaky, the American ambassador to Colombia from 1974-76, said “It [the drug issue] was there. We had DEA guys in the embassy but it was not a central element of our policy. At the time there were no cartels and little to no involvement in the cocaine trade... No one saw it [U.S. drug policy] reaching the proportions that it did.”<sup>84</sup>

Cocaine trafficking would not fly under the radar for much longer though. When President Reagan was inaugurated in 1981, he moved to make drugs the top priority in the United States’ foreign policy to Colombia. Americans were getting worked up about the drug problem that was increasingly becoming an issue in their own backyards. The presence of drug traffickers in the United States corresponded with increased levels of violent crime, especially in places like Miami where large quantities were entering the country and rival gangs fought over control of the market. At the same time, large numbers of hispanics began migrating north, often crossing the border illegally, and many Americans started to become very vocal against the new wave of unwelcome immigrants. Cocaine, which had previously been an expensive and fashionable drug of choice for the upper class, “lost all its stylishness when it started showing up on the city streets in its cheap, smokable form, crack.”<sup>85</sup> The rhetoric for the “War on Drugs” was increasing in intensity, as evidenced by Nancy Reagan’s “Just Say No” campaign.

In January of 1982, President Reagan established a cabinet-level task force to handle the United States’ counternarcotics efforts, especially in southern Florida where most of the illegal drugs entered the country, and appointed Vice President George Bush

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<sup>84</sup> Russell Crandall, *Driven by Drugs: U.S. Policy Toward Colombia* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 26.

<sup>85</sup> Bowden, 42.



as its leader.<sup>86</sup> That year DEA agents in Florida received a tip that a large cocaine shipment would be coming in on flight operated by a small Colombian air cargo company. The packages, labeled as “JEANS,” all contained kilos of pure cocaine. The seizure totaled 3,609 pounds with an estimated wholesale value of US\$100 million. It was far more than any of the agents ever expected to find and was four times the size of the previous record cocaine seizure. The DEA was stunned at the scale and what it implied; that the different drug traffickers must have been cooperating with each other to orchestrate a shipment of this magnitude.<sup>87</sup> In 1976, the DEA had estimated that between 14 and 19 metric tons of cocaine crosses the border into the United States. By 1982 that estimate had shot upwards of 45 metric tons entering the country per year.<sup>88</sup> It was around this time, when officials became aware of the Medellín cartel, that Washington and the DEA switched its efforts from trying to intercept drugs entering the country to targeting the high-level traffickers in Colombia.

In 1983 Reagan assigned Lewis Tambs, a professor of Latin American History, to the position of Ambassador to Colombia. Tambs was assertive and firmly anticommunist, although he had been instructed to make the drug issue a priority.<sup>89</sup> Tambs, likely chosen for his demanding and at times overbearing nature, became a key tool that Washington used to exert increasing political influence on the Betancur administration. In June of that year a secret CIA report speculated that several of Colombia’s leftist guerrilla organizations had developed ties with the drug trafficking groups, protecting the traffickers’ growing areas and shipments and using the money paid to them to buy

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<sup>86</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 69.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 71-73

<sup>88</sup> Bruce M. Bagley, “Colombia and the War on Drugs,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 67, No. 1 (1988), 76, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/20043675>.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 103.

weapons.<sup>90</sup> Establishing a link between drug traffickers and communism made the issue even hotter in Washington and Tambs began to apply more pressure on the Betancur administration to respond. If the drug traffickers and leftist guerrillas were working together, they represented a direct threat to the United States' interests in Colombia and Washington would do whatever it took to eliminate that danger. Tambs began using the term "narco-guerrillas" to refer to the apparent cooperation between the drug traffickers and the leftist organizations and to further push Washington's anti-drug agenda.<sup>91</sup> However, Betancur opposed the United States' interventionist policy and continued refusing to enforce the 1979 extradition treaty. Only a couple years earlier the drug traffickers had openly waged war against the M-19. Most Colombians thought the idea of an alliance between the guerrillas and the traffickers was Washington's creative invention designed to justify interfering in Colombia's domestic policies. Betancur himself repeatedly chastised Tambs for what he considered oversteps into Colombia's internal affairs.<sup>92</sup> Additionally, a priority on Betancur's agenda was to work towards establishing peace with the guerrillas and Washington's interference was not only complicating the process but it was putting Betancur's political success and legitimacy at risk.<sup>93</sup>

Around 1983, Escobar caught the attention of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and became the subject of investigation. In August of that same year, Rodrigo Lara Bonilla was appointed as Colombia's Minister of Justice. He made it his mission to target corruption in Colombian politics and to expose the politicians who were on the drug traffickers' payroll. Tambs and other U.S. officials had long been frustrated

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<sup>90</sup> Bowden, 43.

<sup>91</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 104.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 104.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 105.

by the apparent complacency in the Colombian government when it came to the drug issue, so naturally they were very eager to encourage Lara's initiative, even if many Colombian politicians were staunchly unsupportive.

Within only a few years, Escobar would become a notorious figure in the American media and his villainous portrayal, along with the well-publicized crack cocaine problem, would help boost domestic support for Washington's counter-narcotics intervention abroad. In 1987 a photograph of him appeared with Fabio Ochoa on the cover of *The New York Times Magazine* with the title "Cocaine Billionaires: The Men Who Hold Colombia Hostage."<sup>94</sup> The same magazine featured several stories over the years on Escobar's campaign of violence against Colombian politicians. His reputation for large scale acts of violent terrorism even briefly earned him a place as a suspect in the 1993 World Trade Center bombing, which he quickly denied. "'They can take me off the list,' he told the American Ambassador in a letter, 'because if I had done it, I would be saying why and I would be saying what I want.'"<sup>95</sup>

In 1987 a poll published by CBS News and the *New York Times* in 1988 showed that 48% of Americans believed that illegal drugs represented the United States' biggest foreign policy challenge and 63% thought the drug issue was more important than containing communism.<sup>96</sup> Washington's agenda was to eradicate drugs at their source, arguing that it would be the cheapest and most effective action,<sup>97</sup> which made it a foreign policy issue. In April of 1986, President Reagan signed National Security Decision Directive 221, which made drug trafficking a matter of national security and thereby

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<sup>94</sup> See figure... link to image

<sup>95</sup> Douglas Jehl, "Americans Feel Terror's Senseless Logic," *The New York Times*, March 7, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/03/07/weekinreview/americans-feel-terror-s-senseless-logic.html>.

<sup>96</sup> Crandall, 32.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

authorized military involvement in counter-narcotics efforts.<sup>98</sup> From that point on, U.S. counter-narcotics efforts abroad became increasingly militarized. In 1989, President Bush announced his Andean Initiative plan, which made the Andean region, especially Colombia, the largest receiver of U.S. military aid.<sup>99</sup> As another means to coerce international cooperation in the War on Drugs, the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act established a drug certification process that made countries cooperate with Washington's counter-narcotics efforts in order to be eligible to receive military and economic aid. That meant that Colombia had to follow Washington's plan, which usually involved military involvement and spraying chemical herbicides, or else it would be denied the resources it needed to combat the drug traffickers. Colombia was decertified in 1996 and again in 1997 under the Samper administration for failure to cooperate, upsetting the Colombian people although he was able to promote himself as a guardian of Colombia's sovereignty.<sup>100</sup> The Colombian people and government were frustrated and felt manipulated by the United States' heavy involvement and pressure within their country and felt that the focus on foreign drug eradication over reducing demand at home was hypocritical and counter-productive. President Turbay himself said, "Colombians are not corrupting Americans. You are corrupting us. If you abandon illegal drugs, the traffic will disappear."<sup>101</sup>

In July of 1992, shortly after Escobar escaped from his private prison after his brief surrender, a Joint Hearing of the Committee of Foreign Affairs was held addressing the future of the War on Drugs after Escobar's escape. The rhetoric against Escobar and

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<sup>98</sup> Bowden, 55.

<sup>99</sup> Crandall, 34.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>101</sup> Bagley, 81.

the drug traffickers was intense. Robert Torricelli, Chairman of the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs said, “The flow of drugs from Colombia is no different from an assault on our shores.” Another speaker called the drug lords a “sickness in society.” Torricelli argued:

The drug kingpins who are responsible for the narcotics flowing into our country, our cities, our schools, must be taken out of commission. If Colombia is unable to do that... then we will have to revisit the issue of extradition. And if we cannot to that, then the United States must reserve the right of unilateral action to itself, whether covert or overt or otherwise, to win this fight.<sup>102</sup>

As the War on Drugs was escalating in US-Colombian relations during the late 80’s, the war against communism was winding down in other parts of the world. Without the threat of communist infiltration, the United States was left without a global mission or an enemy to unite against. Jorge Castañeda, former Mexican Secretary of Foreign Affairs and a scholar of US-Latin American relations wrote: “Gorbachev has left the United States without an adversary in an area where the enemy, while undeniably real, was never as present, nor as overwhelming, as the United States made him out to be.” Soon the moral battle against the international scourge of illegal drugs would fill the “ideological void” left by the disappearing communist threat.<sup>103</sup>

Even though few who thought seriously about the drug problem believed it could be stopped or even curbed by arresting a few cartel bosses, it proved a lot easier to get the U.S. Congress worked up about a cabal of billionaires infecting America’s youth than about the amorphous smuggling problem. Marshalling public support for war, or even just war spending, requires enemies, and Colombian cocaine barons colorfully fit the description.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The Future of the Andean War on Drugs After the Escape of Pablo Escobar: Hearing before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs and Task Force on International Narcotics Control*, 102<sup>nd</sup> Cong., 2<sup>nd</sup> sess., July 29, 1992, 2-16.

<sup>103</sup> Jorge G. Castañeda, “Latin American and the End of the Cold War,” *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (1990) JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40209157>.

<sup>104</sup> Bowden, 42.

The United States, rather than focusing on reducing the demand for drugs at home, would direct its efforts towards attacking drugs at their source by eradicating crops and targeting high-level drug traffickers. Escobar and the other traffickers would quickly become the face of the enemy in the United States' drug crusade.

#### BOGOTÁ'S DEBUNKING OF THE ROBIN HOOD IMAGE

Despite the increasingly negative opinion of drug traffickers in the United States, Escobar was still living large in Colombia. The War on Drugs was not hurting his business. He had wealth, popularity, and a political career that granted him a position as an accepted member of Colombian society. However his glory would be short-lived. The favor of the Colombian political elites proved much more difficult to buy than that of the urban poor, especially when the United States was steadily increasing its pressure for them to denounce the drug traffickers and their money.

Escobar found a formidable enemy in Lara as the new Minister of Justice. The 1982 election that had put Betancur in office and gotten Escobar a seat as a congressman was tainted by accusations of accepting drug money from both sides. The hot money scandal was gaining national attention. Surprisingly, it was Escobar's own party, the New Liberal Party headed by Galán that was especially vocal on the issue. Lara was young and ambitious. He took on the investigation of the accusations, knowing that a successful campaign would benefit his career enormously. He had the support of Tambs and Washington who shared his interest in exposing the influence of the drug traffickers in politics. Only a shortly before he exposed Escobar in front of the Colombian congress, the DEA had begun its investigation into Representative Escobar and his connection with the Medellín cartel.

Lara openly suggested that Escobar's career, as well as that of several others associated with him, was funded by drug money. When Escobar came to the Bogotá to address the accusation in August of 1983, Lara singled him out directly in the chamber of the House of Representatives, informing the chamber of the investigations being undertaken in the United States regarding Escobar's "criminal conduct."<sup>105</sup> There was a political backlash against Escobar and the drug traffickers. His social reputation had been tainted. His visa was revoked and he was kicked out of the New Liberal Party. Galán and Lara publicly denounced him and all politicians who had linked to drug trafficking in front on thousands of people in Medellín, the base of Escobar's support network.<sup>106</sup> He would not forget Galán's insult either.

Only days later, the newspaper *El espectador* published a story written by the editor, Guillermo Cano, exposing Escobar's arrest records from 1976.

The substitute representative to the Chamber for the *santofimismo*<sup>107</sup>, Pablo Escobar Gavirra, figures among the six individuals captured June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1976 in the Antioqueño locality of Itagüí with a load of 39 pounds of cocaine as a culmination of an operative mounted by the branch office of the Antioquia DAS.<sup>108</sup>

Escobar, in a desperate attempt to salvage his public image, ordered his men to go out and buy every last copy of the edition to keep the news from spreading, but it was already too late. The story was being broadcast on radio and television and other newspapers had picked it up as well.<sup>109</sup> Even the American media got a hold of the story; ABC-TV presented a documentary on Pablo Escobar, Colombia's richest drug

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<sup>105</sup> Bowden, 37.

<sup>106</sup> Salazar, 92.

<sup>107</sup> The supporters of Liberal Senator Alberto Santofimio, an influential politician and ally of Escobar and Ortega who was known to be associated with the drug traffickers.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 118. Quote translated here by writer.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 119.

trafficker.<sup>110</sup> Escobar had evaded punishment for the 1976 arrest, but after the public scandal the case was reopened that September. The judge handling the case ordered Escobar arrested for conspiracy to murder the DAS agents who had arrested him. Senator Alberto Santofimio, who Escobar publicly supported, requested that he resign from politics and surrender his diplomatic immunity, but at that point his congressional seat was the only thing protecting him from the justice system.<sup>111</sup> Lara and his allied continued their efforts to expose the drug traffickers. Newspapers got a hold of records of Escobar's car thefts and then he was fined US\$5000 for illegally importing wild animals to Hacienda Nápoles.<sup>112</sup> The fine was insignificant, but the message was clear; Colombia had turned its back on Pablo Escobar.

In January he formally announced his retirement from politics, although he was not officially removed from his seat until December.<sup>113</sup> He issued a public statement in which he promised to continue fighting against injustice and denounced the political oligarchy, declaring "*los apremios y dolencias populares están distantes de la sensibilidad de los políticos cuyas egoístas miradas sólo se encuentran fijas en retocar sus deterioradas imágenes narcisistas y acrecentar sus tambaleantes feudos podridos.*"<sup>114</sup> In March he held a political rally where he called Lara an accomplice of Washington's imperialist plot in Colombia.<sup>115</sup> For the rest of his life Escobar would always vilify the politicians who opposed him, painting them as corrupt tools of the imperialist gringos, and validate himself as a man of the people who was unjustly persecuted.

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<sup>110</sup> Bowden, 40.

<sup>111</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 117.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid., 118.

<sup>113</sup> Bowden, 44.

<sup>114</sup> Salazar, 121. "...the pressures and ailments of the people are far from the feelings of the politicians whose selfish gazes only find themselves fixed on retouching their deteriorated narcissistic images and expanding their tottering rotten estates."

<sup>115</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 139.



A couple of months later, the Colombian National Police with assistance from Lara and U.S. forces carried out a raid on a cocaine-processing center hidden deep in the jungle known as Tranquilandia. They found and destroyed seven airplanes and airstrips, 12,000 drums of chemicals and an estimated US\$1 billion worth of cocaine. Escobar and the cartel could not tolerate such embarrassment and violation. Only weeks later in April of 1984, Lara was assassinated in the street by a group of *sicarios*, initiating a nationwide political and police campaign against Escobar and the drug traffickers.<sup>116</sup> Killing the country's Minister of Justice was an offense that could not be ignored. Guillermo Cano wrote of the traffickers in *El espectador*, "For some time now these sinister men have managed to create an empire of immorality, tricking and making fools of the complacent, doling out crumbs and bribes upon them while a cowardly and often entranced populace stood idly by, content with their illusions and entertained by stories of their jet set lives."<sup>117</sup> President Betancur spoke at Lara's funeral, where he declared that he would move to enforce extradition of drug traffickers, stating "Colombia will hand over criminals wanted in other countries so they may be punished as an example."<sup>118</sup> Escobar fled to Panama with several other traffickers where Manuel Noriega, then the commander of the army, had offered them safe haven in exchange for US\$4 million.<sup>119</sup> Extradition to the United States, his worst fear, had now become a real possibility. In less than a year Escobar had gone from being Medellín's most popular benefactor to its most wanted criminal.

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<sup>116</sup> Bowden, 44.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 144.

<sup>119</sup> Bowden, 45.

The Colombian elites had never admired Escobar the way the poor had, but merely tolerated him and accepted his financial contributions. No Colombian officials believed in the construction that Escobar presented of himself as a generous benefactor and good-will citizen. Former President César Gaviria spoke of his “enormous capacity to manipulate the public” through his charity work, although he also denied the idea that many Colombians admired Escobar.<sup>120</sup> Andrés Pastrana, president from 1998 to 2002, also affirmed the belief that Escobar’s charity was a selfishly motivated ploy to “buy the consciences of the poor” and ensure his personal security.<sup>121</sup> When Escobar sought public office, however, he threatened to disrupt the status quo and the ruling class could not accept him, especially amidst increasing pressure and influence from Washington. The elites felt no loyalty towards him and by assassinating Lara he cemented his identity in their minds as a *bandido* and an enemy of the state.

#### PERSECUTING THE *BANDIDO*

From their hold out in Panama, Escobar and the other traffickers began to pursue negotiations for an amnesty deal, desperate to avoid extradition at all costs. Former President Alfonso López Michelsen met Escobar and Jorge Ochoa in Panama City at their request and they presented a letter to President Betancur. They denied any involvement in Lara’s murder, but admitted that they represented up to 80% of the cocaine trade and an annual income of US\$2 billion. They offered to dismantle their entire operation, move all of their money held in Swiss banks back to Bogotá, and even offered their assistance in putting and end to all drug trafficking activity in Colombia on

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<sup>120</sup> *Pablo Escobar: ángel o demonio*. Statement translated here by writer.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid*. Statement translated here by writer.

the condition that they could keep their money and they would be guaranteed freedom from extradition.<sup>122</sup> It was rumored that they even offered to pay off Colombia's US\$10 billion national debt. The U.S. embassy and a growing number of Colombian politicians strongly opposed even engaging the trafficker's requests and Betancur ignored their offer.

Escobar would not accept no for an answer. He famously declared "Better a tomb in Colombia than a prison cell in the United States."<sup>123</sup> His strategy was always the same; *plata o plomo*. If he couldn't buy his protection from extradition, he would eliminate who ever threatened him with it. In 1985, Ambassador Tambs left Colombia after a car bomb exploded outside his home in Bogotá and the judge investigating the case of Lara's murder was killed. Later that year, Escobar's elderly father was kidnapped, but he was released unharmed with no ransom paid only weeks later after Escobar's *sicarios* "turned Medellín inside out." Despite being wanted for arrest in Colombia, he returned to Medellín, confident that he could evade the authorities.<sup>124</sup> He offered to turn himself in again on the same conditions as before, but the government refused again.

He revived his public campaigns against extradition, forming an organization called "the Extraditables" that acted on his behalf issuing statements and letters written to politicians and judges. The communiqués denounced extradition as a violation of Colombia's sovereignty, "the vilest of outrages," and threatened "absolute and total war" against the political leaders.<sup>125</sup> Judges received letters promising the death of their families if they did not rule extradition unconstitutional. The threats were effective; over thirty judges had been murdered since Lara's death and the rest were truly worried. In

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<sup>122</sup> Gugliotta and Leen, 176.

<sup>123</sup> Bowden, 51.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 52.

November 1985 the M-19 stormed the Palace of Justice in Bogotá and demanded that the Supreme Court repudiate the extradition treaty. They also destroyed Escobar's criminal cases files among thousands of others. In the aftermath, eleven justices were dead along with fifty employees and forty guerrillas. Escobar supposedly paid the organization US\$ 1 million to carry out the attack. In 1986 the Supreme Court declared the treaty invalid on the technicality that it had been signed by a delegate and not the president, although new President Virgilio Barco reinstated the treaty only days later.<sup>126</sup> However, Escobar continued making and enforcing threats, usually under the identity of the Extraditables. Guillermo Cano, editor of *El espectador* who had spoken out against the traffickers, was killed, and the judge handling his case received a letter from the Extraditables warning "We are capable of executing you at any place on this planet."<sup>127</sup> He remained in Medellín where he felt safe, protected by a network of supporters that remained loyal to him. He repeatedly escaped police and military raids, always being tipped off, likely by sources on the inside.

Escobar had made other attempts to negotiate a settlement with the government but was always refused. Each time he was denied the retaliation got worse. Luis Galán, Escobar's old enemy, was running for the presidency for the 1990 election with a fierce anti-drug campaign. Knowing that Galán's election would end his chances of ever defeating extradition, Escobar ordered a hit. In August of 1989 Galán was shot by a *sicario* while speaking to supporters in Soacha, south of Bogotá. His successor, César Gaviria, who would be elected president, survived an assassination attempt in which Escobar's men planted a bomb on an airplane he was supposed to be on, killing one

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 55.

hundred and ten people.<sup>128</sup> Then Escobar went after the politicians personally, kidnapping the daughter of former president Turbay and the sister of former president Barco's Chief of Staff; both women were killed. In the first months of 1991 Colombia was experiencing on average twenty murders every day.<sup>129</sup> In June of that year, the Constitutional Assembly voted to outlaw extradition and Escobar turned himself in.<sup>130</sup> As part of the terms of his surrender, worked out by his lawyers, he only confessed to the crime of participating in a French drug deal arranged by his then dead cousin.<sup>131</sup> The other of his terms guaranteed that he would be housed in his own private prison, that he constructed himself, staffed by his personal guards. President Gaviria, desperate to end the bloodshed, had accepted the terms.

During this campaign of violence against the state, Escobar had become an infamous figure in American media as well. There was no shortage of material for reporters and journalists to use to construct an image of Escobar as a supremely powerful and violent super villain that terrorized Colombia, but the dramatic saga of the battle between the criminal and the authorities and the extravagant lifestyle of the drug traffickers also held a sort of popular appeal. The figure of the Latin American drug lord was glamorized in films like *Scarface*, released in 1983, becoming a pop culture icon. The TV series *Miami Vice*, airing from 1984-1990, dramatized the detectives' and police officers' struggle against drug dealers in southern Florida. The position of the United States government and the national media regarding the issue was clearly reflected in their villainous portrayal of Escobar.

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 101.

One of his first appearances on American television was the 1983 special on ABC, aired shortly after Lara had exposed Escobar in the Chamber of Representatives, called “The Cocaine Cartel.” It described Escobar as “one of the richest men in the world” and claimed he shipped 1,100 pounds of cocaine into the United States each month. The program also highlighted on the violence the cocaine brought with it, mentioning “Colombian gunmen, who use semiautomatic weapons, are renowned for their ferocity. ‘They will kill the mother, father, children, whoever is around,’ says a policeman...”<sup>132</sup> In 1987 Escobar first appeared on Forbes Magazine’s Billionaire List with an estimated net worth of around US\$3 billion, although in later years that estimate would be higher. His biography described his ascension from a street criminal to a cocaine baron, also including his association with public charity work and his reputation for violence. He remained a constant figure on the list every year until his death in 1993.<sup>133</sup>

While staying in his private prison, *La Catedral*, he continued living quite extravagantly. He had visitors often and police could only monitor and report the flow of people and contraband into the prison.<sup>134</sup> He received letters of support on a daily basis from the poor Colombians who were still loyal to him. The whole time he continued to blame the government for what he considered unjust persecution, orchestrated by Washington. In handwritten notes later discovered by police, he blamed the “gringos” who had ‘forced, by means of economic pressure, a government of slaves to engage in a fratricidal war against the so-called drug cartels.’<sup>135</sup> He once said to his lawyer that after experiencing the terror and bloodshed of *la Violencia*, he had come to realize that

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<sup>132</sup> Lee Winfrey, “The laundering of drug money examined in ABC special,” *The News and Courier*, August 19, 1983, Accessed via Google News Archives.

<sup>133</sup> Carlyle.

<sup>134</sup> Bowden, 115.

<sup>135</sup> Ibid., 48.

terrorism “was the atomic bomb of the poor people. It is the only way for the poor to strike back.”<sup>136</sup>

President Gaviria had been somewhat accommodating in his negotiations with the drug traffickers but had taken a harder line against the United States’ interference and criticism of Colombia’s counternarcotics efforts and the relationship between the two countries cooled significantly. U.S. officials were pressuring the Gaviria administration to do something about Escobar’s luxurious “prison” and lax rule enforcement. The final straw came when two of Escobar’s former business partners went missing and were presumed dead after visiting *La Catedral*. Escobar’s prison conditions and his behavior was an embarrassment to the Colombian justice system and in July of 1992 President Gaviria ordered him transferred to a prison in Bogotá.<sup>137</sup> However, Escobar found out about the plan and took hostages, refusing to allow himself to be transferred. In the chaos that ensued, Escobar escaped, which was a humiliation for the Colombian government and armed forces.

He would be on the run for the next year and a half, usually hiding out in Medellín where he was protected. He continually communicated with the press and proclaimed his innocence, while simultaneously his car bombs wrecked havoc in Bogotá. Colombian and American Special Forces cooperated in a nationwide manhunt, employing every means available to locate the fugitive. Finally, on December 2, 1993, one day after Escobar’s 44<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was surrounded in a house in Los Olivos, a neighborhood in Medellín. In the midst of the shootout, he was shot and killed while

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<sup>136</sup> Ibid., 111.

<sup>137</sup> Ibid., 119.

running across a rooftop, although his brother and some others believe that he instead killed himself to rob his persecutors of the satisfaction.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Salazar, 25.



## CONCLUSION

Escobar's dramatic story is reminiscent of those of the *bandidos* of *la Violencia*, like Efraín González and Chispas who despite attempts to gain amnesty were eventually hunted down and killed by the authorities. The *bandidos*, Escobar included, were outlaws and violent criminals by definition, but they also represented a cause to the people who supported them and were protected by them. When that cause was in opposition to the ruling authority they became more than just wanted criminals, they became victims of political persecution to further the government's agenda. Escobar was undoubtedly a dangerous criminal and a threat to public security, but he was also a pawn in a much larger political game.

When he died, many Colombians rejoiced and celebrated the end of a terribly violent era and Americans applauded the accomplishment as a great step forward in combating the illegal drug trade. Thousands of other Colombians mourned the loss of their hero and protector, the one person that defended cared for them in a system that excluded them from any hope for improvement. At his funeral, the mob of mourners seized his coffin and carried it to the gravesite. They cried out "Viva Pablo" and praised his generosity, calling the police murderers and asking what would they do now without anyone or anything to help them. The crowd of mourners pushed against each other to reach out and touch his coffin.<sup>139</sup> One photo even shows the lid being lifted as they fought for one last glimpse.<sup>140</sup>

Escobar's social constructions have not only outlived him, but have grown and strengthened since his death. American media, including documentaries, books, and TV

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<sup>139</sup> James Brooke, "A Drug Lord Is Buried as a Folk Hero," *The New York Times*, December 4, 1993, <http://www.nytimes.com/1993/12/04/world/a-drug-lord-is-buried-as-a-folk-hero.html>.

<sup>140</sup> See Appendix X: Image.

specials, as well as the Colombian press, presents Escobar as a ruthless terrorist and an enemy of the state who killed thousands of innocent people. This construction ignores his generous charity work, or dismisses it as a dishonest strategy to manipulate the public. His character has grown to legendary proportions, becoming one of the most famous criminals of all time for the scale of his devastation and terrible power. Yet in popular neighborhoods in Colombia, the people who supported him have preserved and strengthened his Robin Hood image. Since his death he has become like a martyr to them. Their construction portrays Escobar as the definitive outlaw hero; a reincarnation of the legendary *bandidos* of the past, except his legend is even more vivid and detailed. He came from the population of urban poor and made his success taking advantage of the vices of the wealthy. In turn, he generously shared his success with all of the people who the wealthy had exploited and disenfranchised, like a real life Robin Hood. When the authorities in Washington and Bogotá persecuted him for his noble crimes, as his supporters saw it, they became the villain of the story.

Escobar lives on as a glorious *bandido* in the lyrics of many *narcocorridos*, Mexican and Colombian ballads that romanticize the life of the outlaw. One seems to capture the essence of the Robin Hood legend that has grown around Escobar's memory. Written by Colombian artist Uriel Henao, the title is "No soy culpable" ("I am not to blame):

Yo era muy pobre, pero un día Dios lo dispuso  
que yo me fuera por el mundo a trajinar  
y sin pensar lo que dijeron los humanos,  
con valentía yo me puse a traficar.

Yo soy mafioso pero a nadie le hago daño;  
lo que consigo lo reparto por igual;  
tengo dinero y me lo gasto en lo que quiero;

yo soy valiente pero a nadie le hago mal.<sup>141</sup>

As is always the case regarding figures like Escobar, each construction relies on a selective telling of the story and one's social position. Those who tend to see the government as a corrupt oppressive force are more likely to see Escobar as a benevolent character and those who support the government will see Escobar as the enemy. Neither side presents the real, whole truth of Escobar's identity. In the creation of a legend though, whether a legendary hero or a legendary villain, the truth doesn't matter as much as the story and what it means to those who tell it.

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<sup>141</sup> Carlos Valbuena, "Sobre héroes, monstruos y tumbas. Los capos el en narcocorrido colombiano," *Caravalle* 88 (1988), 235, JSTOR, <http://www.jstor.com/stable/40854337>.

"I was very poor, but one day God ordained it; that I should go bustle about the world; and without thinking of what people said; with courage I put myself to trafficking. I am a gangster but I do harm to none; what I obtain I distribute equally; I have money and I spend it on what I want; I am brave but I do harm to none."

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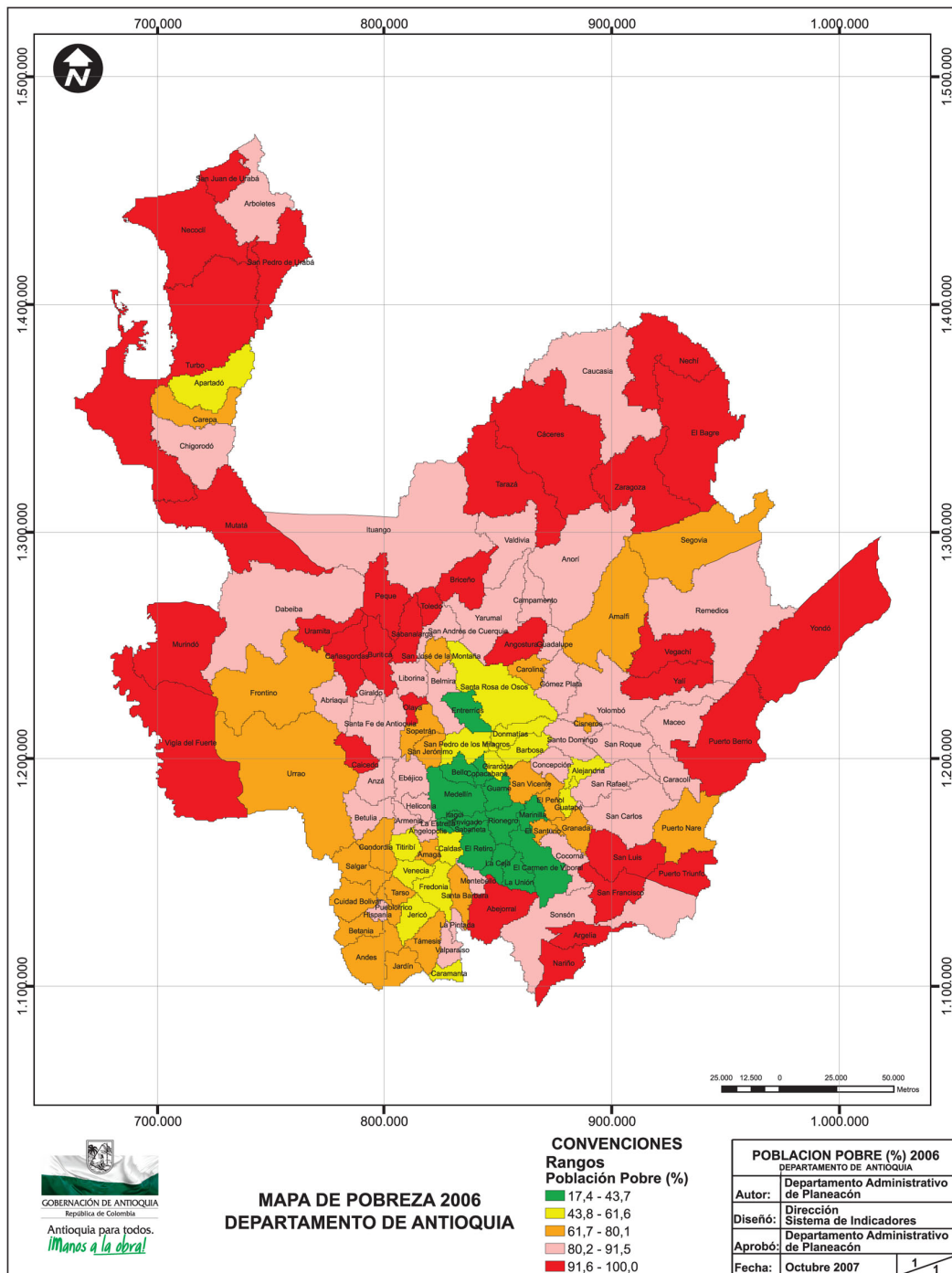
## APPENDIX I



Topographic map of Colombia showing departments and major cities.

*Colombia Physiography*, 2008, Map, CIA Maps, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/cia-maps-publications/Colombia.html>.

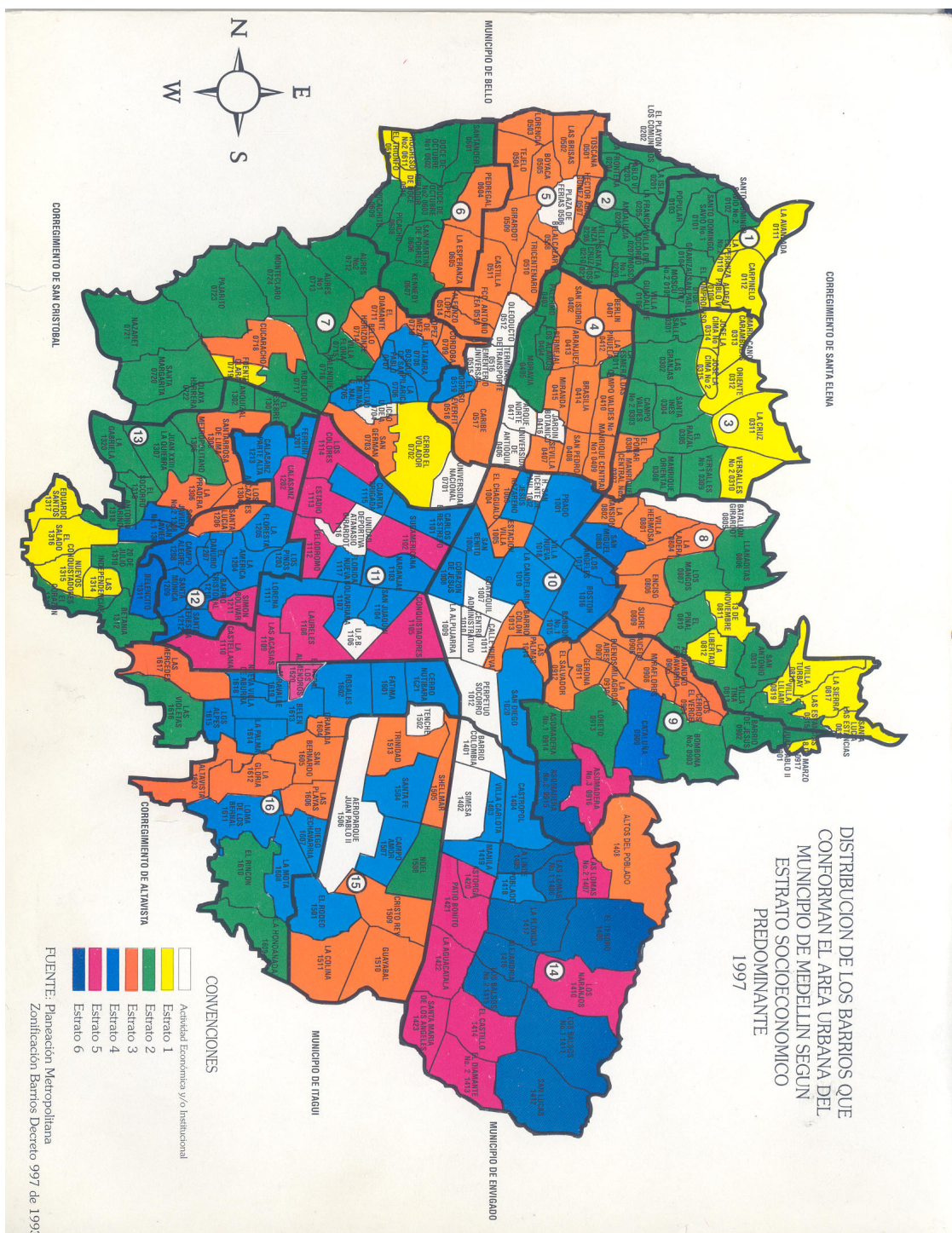
## APPENDIX II



Map showing distribution of poverty in Antioquia department, 2006.

*Mapa de Pobreza, 2006, Map, Gobernación de Antioquia, [http://antioquia.gov.co/antioquia-v1/organismos/planeacion/anuario2006/indicadores/pobreza\\_2006\\_anuario.jpg](http://antioquia.gov.co/antioquia-v1/organismos/planeacion/anuario2006/indicadores/pobreza_2006_anuario.jpg).*

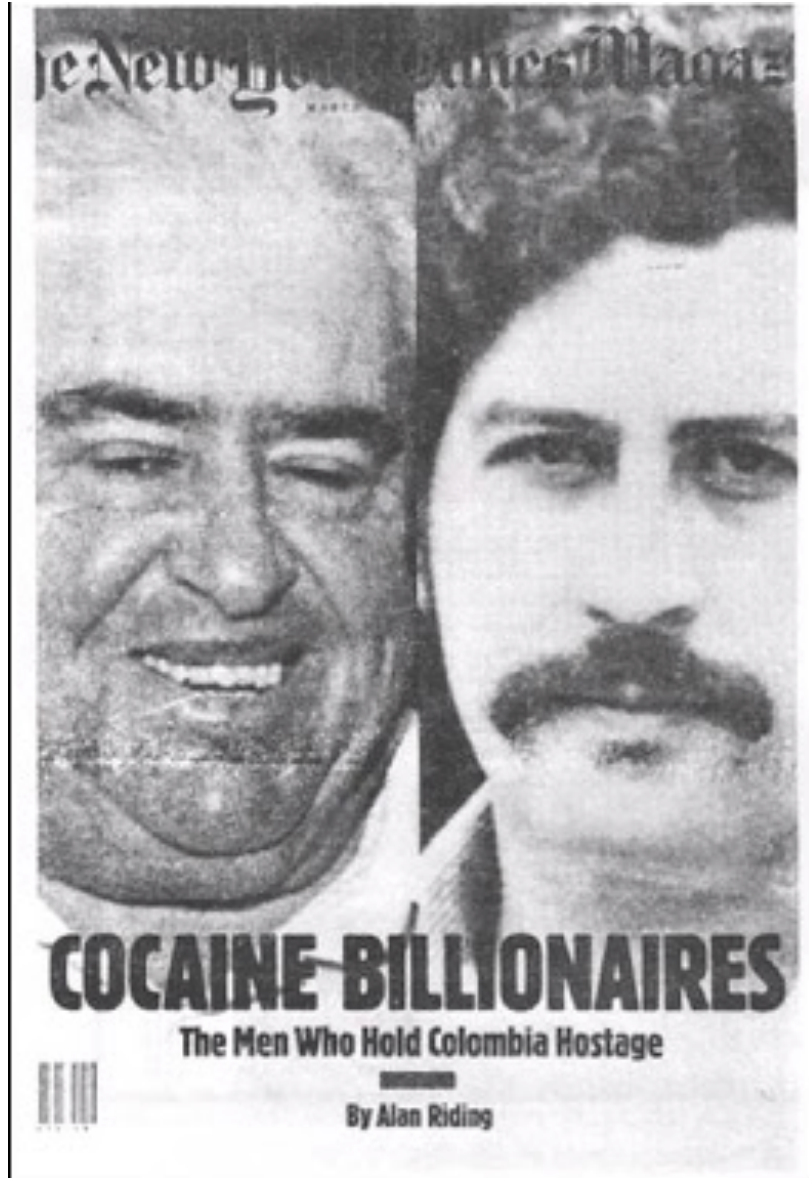




Map showing economic strata of neighborhoods in Medellín, 1997.

*Distribución de estratos socioeconómicos en Medellín, 1997*, Map, Universidad Nacional de Colombia,  
[http://www.Medellín.unal.edu.co/habitat/galeria/albums/userpics/10005/normal\\_mapa01.jpg](http://www.Medellín.unal.edu.co/habitat/galeria/albums/userpics/10005/normal_mapa01.jpg).

#### APPENDIX IV



The New York Times Magazine Cover, March 1987.

*The New York Times Magazine Cover, March 1987, Image,*  
<http://www.proyectopabloescobar.com/2011/04/portada-del-new-york-times-magazine.html>.

## APPENDIX V



A woman holds a portrait of Escobar next to a mural that reads “Welcome to *Barrio Pablo Escobar*. Here there is peace.” Medellín.

Andrés Henao, *Barrio Pablo Escobar*, 2012, Photograph,  
[http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW\\_NOTA\\_INTERIOR-12131722.html](http://www.eltiempo.com/colombia/medellin/ARTICULO-WEB-NEW_NOTA_INTERIOR-12131722.html).



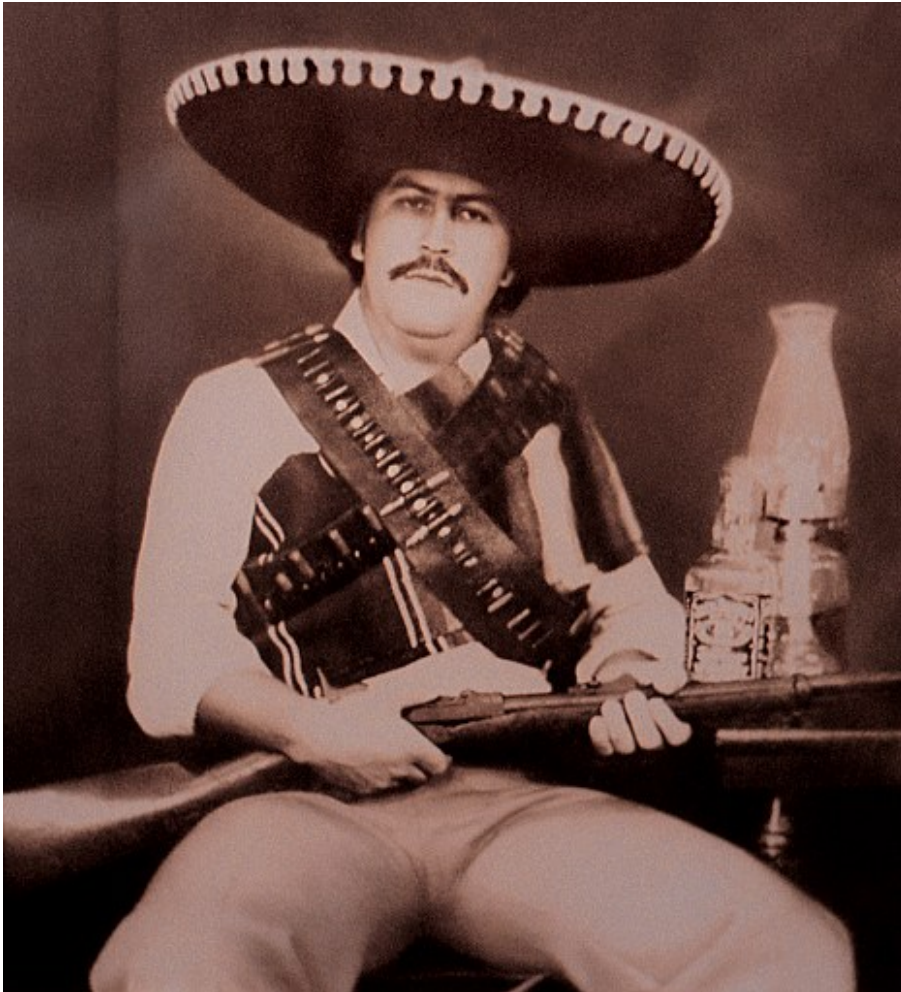
## APPENDIX VI



Graffiti in *Barrio Pablo Escobar*, Medellín.

Photograph, <http://www.lafm.com.co/noticias/colombia/11-08-12/el-barrio-pablo-escobar-ultimo-11>.

## APPENDIX VII



Pablo Escobar dressed as Pancho Villa.

Photograph, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1224904/Colombian-druglord-Pablo-Escobar-burned-1million-cash-daughter-warm-single-night-run.html>.

## APPENDIX VIII



Pablo Escobar at a *Civismo en Marcha* rally.

*Civismo en Marcha*, 1979, Photograph, <http://www.proyectopabloescobar.com/2011/06/civismo-en-marcha.html>.

## APPENDIX IX



“Un Robin Hood paisa,” Original article in *Semana* magazine.

*Un Robin Hood paisa*, 1983, Photograph, <http://www.proyectopabloescobar.com/2011/05/un-robin-hood-paisa.html>.



## APPENDIX X



Mourners open Escobar's coffin on the way to the burial.

1993, Still Frame, <http://www.telemundo52.com/videos/He-aqui-el-entierro-del-peor-capo-de-la-historia-162441586.html>.

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