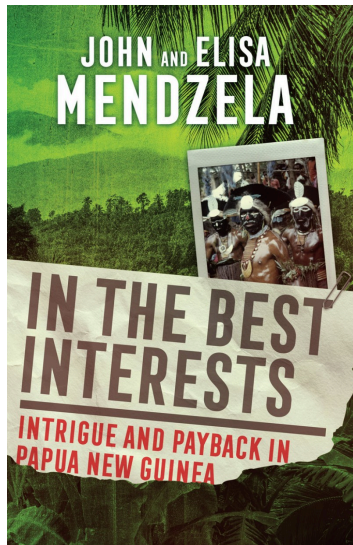




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In The Best Interests

Written by: John and Elisa Mendzela
Mendhurst

Reviewed by: Kerry Lee

As husband and wife John and Elisa Mendzela discovered, sometimes truth can be far stranger and more dangerous than fiction. In the 1980s, the Western couple flew into Papua New Guinea to begin teaching at the Keravat College. Not long afterwards, they uncovered systematic corruption involving the sexual exploitation of Keravat's students.

In The Best Interests: Intrigue and Payback in Papua New Guinea is a book I found hard to put down once I picked it up. The narrative non-fiction memoir had me shaking my head at the hurdles that both John and Elisa had to jump over to get someone to listen to them and act on their accusations.

John and Elisa take turns narrating the story. The shift in perspectives gives readers a full view of what is going on and fleshes out the dangers that both faced in order to tell their side of the story and to get Papua New Guinea authorities to act.



Both authors write extremely descriptively, painting a very realistic picture of what they were facing and how many roadblocks were put in their way. Neither of them shy away from describing the problems they encountered, the emotional toll that was taken, and the people who stood by them.

This was a novel that will stay with me for a long while. As someone living in a developed country, I cannot begin to fathom the problems developing nations faced roughly 30 years ago. *In The Best Interests* is one of those stories that you keep turning over and over in your head, simply because it is so difficult and terrible to comprehend how something like that could have been allowed to happen and why so many people would enable it.

Dedicated in part to 'the Papua New Guineans of today who refuse to let the bad overwhelm the good', I wholeheartedly recommend *In the Best Interests*

to anyone who likes non-fiction
mixed with a bit of intrigue. Easily
my book of the year.



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