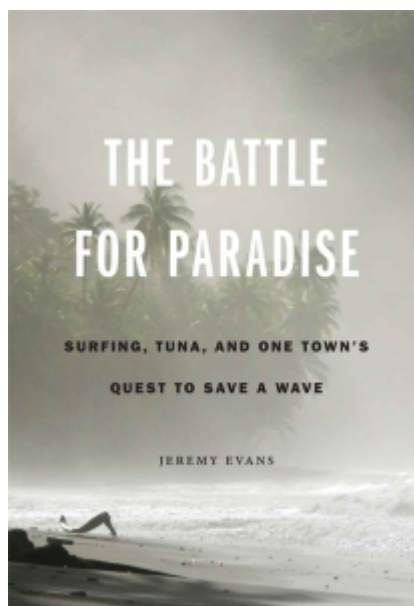


Book review: 'Battle for Paradise' misses its mark

By Kathryn Reed

A tropical country, surfers, a legendary wave, drug dealers and corporate greed – all the makings for fictional fantasy. Only this was reality.

Controversy and years of legal haggling started in 2004 when a company received approval from Costa Rican government officials to build the world's first yellow fin tuna farm off the coast of this Central America country.



South Lake Tahoe author Jeremy Evans captures the strife and intrigue in "The Battle for Paradise" (University of Nebraska Press, 2015).

The subject is intriguing – taking the reader to a remote impoverished coastal town that is home to a legendary wave. The problem is the book gets incredibly bogged down with the drug dealer. He is integral to the town's evolution, but he takes over the book.

The last chapter where Evans professes his environmental stance is where the heart of the book should have come from. Instead it reads like an afterthought.

If this had been a book heavy on the relationship between the environment and surfing, and less on the drug dealer, it would have been more profound. The drug dealer could be a book unto itself; a biography, perhaps. Evans didn't weave it all together in a manner that flowed well or gave balance to the real issues.

Evans also inserts himself into the story at times when it is not necessary, and is even distracting. This contradicts what he says in the introduction about needing to be an observer.

The subject matter is interesting. And for those who know nothing about the world of Dan Fowlie, the town of Pavones or the corruption of Costa Rica, this would be a good introduction.