

An Unauthorized Biography of the World: Oral History on the Front Lines

by Michael Riordon
Between the Lines (Toronto), 2004

This book explores engaged oral history, the challenging, sometimes dangerous work of recovering fragments of human life-story that have gone missing from the mainstream narrative, the official version. It springs from the author's thirty years of experience as a writer and broadcaster in the field.

Readers encounter a gallery of brave, passionate people who gather oral histories and create outlets for silenced voices. The canvas is broad, the stakes high: the long battle for First Nations lands in Canada, seeking environmental justice in Chicago, women of the Andes speak out on two decades of horrific violence in Peru, homeless people organize in Cleveland, workers recover their histories in Canada, the human story of September 11/01 and after in New York City, gay survivors of electroshock surface in Britain, the struggle for homeland in Israel-Palestine, preserving a people's identity in Newfoundland, peasant resistance to a transnational gold mine in Turkey.

Early comments on the book:

"This wonderful book was written by one who understands oral history from the inside – and masterfully reveals its mission to articulate history's silences."
Mary Marshall Clark, Director, Oral History Research Office, Columbia University, NY

"Make no mistake, this fascinating book is no dry academic history. Michael Riordon's book represents oral history at its passionate best."
Steven High, Assistant Professor, Oral History, Nipissing University, North Bay, Ontario, Canada.

* "Michael Riordon does us all a great service by helping to amplify those so often silenced within this culture, and I thank him for this powerful contribution."
Derrick Jensen, writer, NY Times Magazine; author, *A Language Older than Words*.

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