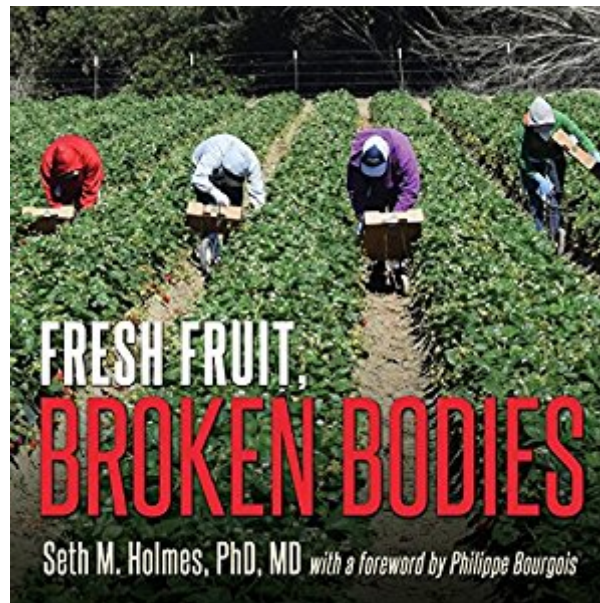




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# Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers In The United States



## Synopsis

Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies provides an intimate examination of the everyday lives and suffering of Mexican migrants in our contemporary food system. An anthropologist and MD in the mold of Paul Farmer and Didier Fassin, Seth M. Holmes shows how market forces, anti-immigrant sentiment, and racism undermine health and health care. Holmes' material is visceral and powerful. He trekked with his companions illegally through the desert into Arizona and was jailed with them before they were deported. He lived with indigenous families in the mountains of Oaxaca and in farm labor camps in the US, planted and harvested corn, picked strawberries, and accompanied sick workers to clinics and hospitals. This "embodied anthropology" deepens our theoretical understanding of the ways in which social inequalities and suffering come to be perceived as normal and natural in society and in health care.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours 24 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: February 2, 2016

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B01AKQNSAC

## Customer Reviews

Holmes' moving work reveals the "bad faith" American consumerism that criminalizes migrant laborers even as it depends on them for access to the dinner table. While his theoretical framework is at times awkward, his analysis of the social plight of his Triqui companions more than compensates for this deficiency. The larger issues of neoliberal market inequalities may at times seem a little daunting for non-academic readers, but Holmes' narrative consistently demonstrates that our demand for cheap products has devastating global consequences. Definitely worth a close read.

I bought this book for my anthropology class and I really enjoyed it. I really changed my outlook on how people are treated on farms and the cost of where our fruits and vegetables come from. I

recommend this for anybody to read.

I loved this book. I had to read it for a class and I wholly agree with that other reader who pointed out the importance of this book. Holmes does an amazing job of pointing out the systemic discrimination and dehumanization of migrant workers and pulling it out of a purely political context. If you don't know anything or if you think you know a lot, this work is indispensable. The anthropological perspective creates a wonderfully holistic and important ethnography. That being said, this is an anthropological work. There are references and there is jargon because this is academic writing. It is very well written and an easy read, but if you are not familiar with some of the jargon then I recommend looking it up when you come across it. Aside from that, it is easy to follow and engaging. Holmes does a great job of pulling together theory and anecdotes, not just from the Triqui workers, but from the bosses, doctors, and other workers in different positions in the fields. This is all together a must read.

I was doing some research/reading on the topic of migrant farm workers and came across this book. This professor lived as a migrant worker (even making a dangerous illegal crossing from Mexico to the U.S.) to study this population's world. In short, I don't now walk through a grocery store's produce department in the same way -- not thinking about the men, women, and kids who picked those items for pennies. The book stays readable for the most part; it's only when Holmes dips into academic language that my eyes glazed over (and I skipped ahead). His recounting his time in the fields, as well as traveling and living with a usually invisible population, was fascinating. Well worth reading.

After reading *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies* you will be hard-pressed to shop for fruits and vegetables at your grocery store without thinking about those who helped bring the produce out of the fields. Their stories help to unfold and expose the rhetoric we hear about preventing undocumented workers from entering the U.S. These are people with families and responsibilities trying to earn a living as best they can. Dr. Holmes' efforts to tell us about them and the work they do is a national service to be commended. Bravo!

Excellent read from start to finish. The author uses ethnography to tell the story of Triqui Mexican migrants in an immensely illuminating fashion. He expands our perceptions by analysing the domestic and international social, economic and political structure in which migration exists. He also

utilizes critical theories to explain the normalization of migrant suffering and how that suffering is illegitimate, along with its naturalization. I'd recommend this book to anyone interested in social justice and is looking for articulate language to illustrate clear ideas around some of the problems precluding and solutions for bringing about social justice and general equity.

This book tells a story that needs to be told, of the people who tend and harvest the food that sustains us, that sustains society who are driven out of their homeland by the hidden hand of an exploitive economic system and then marginalized and criminalized -- the better to exploit you with. The author tells this story as someone who walked in the shoes of his protagonists. And more, he writes with a scientific spirit of uncovering not only the clear injustice of the condition of migrant farmworkers, but the different social groupings they interact with and how each views their roles in this structure. He pays particular attention to health issues and reveals important insights on how social services are delivered to those this social order views as worthy only so long as they produce wealth for others.

Eye opening

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