

FIRESTONE

AND
THE

WARLORD

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What are the costs of doing business in a war zone? In *Firestone and the Warlord*, FRONTLINE and ProPublica investigate the secret relationship between the American tire company Firestone and the infamous Liberian warlord Charles Taylor.

The investigation is a revelatory window into how Firestone conducted business during the brutal Liberian civil war, drawing on previously unreported diplomatic cables, court documents, and inside accounts from Americans who helped run the company's rubber plantation as Liberia descended into chaos.

Reporters T. Christian Miller of ProPublica and Jonathan Jones teamed up with FRONTLINE producer Marcela Gaviria to bring this story to light.

"Charles Taylor and his brutal civil war shaped the Liberia of today," says Miller, who has spent much of his career focusing on how corporations operate in foreign countries. "But unlike anything else that I've worked on, this story provides an extraordinary, inside look at the decision made by an iconic American corporation in dealing with a warlord."

"It's been remarkable to uncover just how interwoven the relationship between the company's management and Taylor really was, and the extent to which Taylor made the plantation a base of operations as he waged a civil war that eventually killed an estimated 300,000 people," says Gaviria (*The Retirement Gamble; Money, Power and Wall Street; WikiSecrets; Obama's War*).

With unprecedented access to key participants, *Firestone and the Warlord* pieces together how the stories of Charles Taylor (the American-educated war criminal notorious for his use of child soldiers) and Firestone (Liberia's largest single employer) intersected in fateful ways between 1989 and 1992.

The investigation uncovers the details of the deal Firestone struck with the warlord—how it channeled millions of dollars to Taylor in exchange for being able to operate—money that, in his own words, provided the "financial assistance that we needed for the revolution," and how Taylor turned the plantation into a rebel base that he used to wage war.

With all eyes on Liberia as the country battles the worst Ebola outbreak in recorded history, *Firestone and the Warlord* shines new light on the country's history and its civil war—a conflict that left lasting scars on the country's infrastructure and psyche—and raises provocative questions about corporate responsibility, accountability, and the ethical ramifications of doing business in conflict zones.

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FRONTLINE

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