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Charles Taylor and Liberia: Ambition and atrocity in Africa's lone star state

Charles Taylor and Liberia: Ambition and atrocity in Africa's lone star state,
by Colin M. Waugh. London and New York, NY: Zed Books, 2011. x + 374 pp. £16.99
(paperback). ISBN 978 1 84813 847 6.

[William Reno](#) ✉

African Affairs, Volume 112, Issue 449, 1 October 2013, Pages 681–683,
<https://doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adt057>

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Building up to focus on a man who was far too big a personality to be contained within a small country, this engaging and well-written book starts with a history of Liberia from its origins in the nineteenth century. Emphasizing this smallness, Waugh frames Liberia's history in terms of connections to the United States that are far more important for it than for the US. Liberia was successful in important ways. Its government was stable for decades and presided over one of the world's fastest growing economies after the Second World War. Then Waugh notes the flaws that numerous others who have written about Liberia's conflict in the 1990s and after cite, such as the privations of the many alongside the comforts of the few, and the backlash of elite hardliners and...

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