

Pablo escobar was a
modern day robin
hood history essay



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This paper will analyze whether Pablo Escobar was a Modern day Robin Hood or a Murderous Tyrant. Escobar to this day is still a highly controversial character and is perceived differently throughout Columbia. The topic was undertaken by thorough research and analyzing documents and interviews. Due to lack of Primary Documents, the majority of my research was from secondary sources. Pablo Escobar grew up in a time period which was referred to simply as the Violencia, Pablo was known as a loving father and the people saw him as a local boy who had done well for himself and gave back millions to the community. Escobar was not always seen as a charitable figure he was targeted by extreme left winged guerrillas. Intimidation and violence were the key factors that lead Pablo Escobar to power. He made his way to the top by spreading fear throughout the Country and killing anyone who stepped in his way. His violence was legendary; Escobar is linked to the murders of many journalists, over 1, 000 police officers, more than 200 judges, an attorney general and a justice minister. When Escobar died the police and government cheered throughout the streets; however hundreds of thousands of Columbians cried. It showed a division of Classes in Columbia the rich were celebrating while the poor people of Columbia were mourning. Over 20, 000 people showed up to his funeral and more than half were crying. Through the analysis of the causes of Corruption, violence and Extortion, Pablo Escobar was proved to be more of a murderous tyrant as opposed to a modernized Robin Hood.

To what extent was Pablo Escobar a modern day Robin Hood or was he just a Murderous Tyrant to the people of Columbia?

Senior Pablo Escobar is arguably the biggest drug dealer in recorded history. He and the Medellin cartel internationalized cocaine at an exponential rate. This topic is worthy of investigation because to this day Pablo Escobar is still a controversial character in Columbia's History. Not only was Pablo Escobar an influential character in his own country but due to his international involvement in drug trade he not only directly but indirectly effected the lives of millions globally. Pablo was notorious for killing thousands and importing over 80% of cocaine trafficked in America at the height of his power. However, the people of Columbia mostly in the slums praise Escobar and refer to him as a modernized Robin Hood. Was Pablo just a criminal master mind knowing that his safety would be much more secure if he supported the poor or did he actually think that he was a legitimate business man and was just giving back to the poor? Pablo Escobar is a controversial but complex character. The people that have come in contact with Pablo or have studied him describe him as ambitious, caring, loving, ruthless, murderous, and evil. Depending on who you talk to the adjectives vary quite drastically.

During the 1950s Columbia was the " Terror capital of the world" (Channel, 2002). The time period was simply referred to as the " Violencia". (Channel, 2002) It was at this time that Pablo Escobar would be born his childhood would be filled with immense bloodshed around him.

The Violencia began mostly because Colombia, was plagued by social and economic problems, was also embroiled in a political feud between the country's two traditional parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, when Jorge Eliecer Gaitan (1902-48), popular left-wing Liberal leader, was assassinated <https://assignbuster.com/pablo-escobar-was-a-modern-day-robin-hood-history-essay/>

on April 9, 1948, while a Pan-American conference was being held in Bogota, the Colombian capital Columbia was thrown into a constant state of insurrection and criminality from 1948 to 1958 (called " La Violencia"), a period during which more than 200, 000 persons lost their lives and more than a billion dollars of property damage was done. (America Conflict Events Database, 2001)

This is significant because Pablo Escobar grew up in a country that was filled with chaos and also because Columbia was filled with crime through out the country before Escobar was even born. The community would have been quite unstable as well and it would have been hard to live a normal life as we see.

Columbia was not in a stable state at the time of Pablo Escobar's birth; the Violencia was just beginning when Pablo was only a year old which could reflect on his anger and no mercy policies. Pablo Escobar was born on December 1, 1949 into a lower-middle class family, young Pablo grew up in the Medellín suburb of Envigado. As a young man, " he was driven and ambitious, telling friends and family that he wanted to be President of Colombia some day. " (Christopher W. Minster) His elder brother, Roberto, reported him as a good brother, who was kind, friendly and intelligent and someone who would achieve greatness. Escobar's drive unfortunately began to find the wrong outlets and he was soon involved in small-time hustling with his gang in the streets of Medellin. There are unproven rumours that, while still at school, Escobar would steal tombstones from the local graveyards, sandblast off the names and sell them to Panamanian smugglers.. Doing whatever he could to make money, by the age of 20, <https://assignbuster.com/pablo-escobar-was-a-modern-day-robin-hood-history-essay/>

Escobar was dealing cannabis, skilled at stealing cars and starting to build a name for himself in the Colombian criminal underworld. (Pablo Escobar Gavira-Archivos, 2000) Pablo was introduced to crime at a very young age. One must look at the society's state and how he got involved into crime. It could be argued that if Pablo was in a better environment his kindness and ambitions could of lead him to great things instead of becoming a drug lord. Escobar was born with ambitions and dreams of money and being the president of Columbia. He possessed many character traits that a successful man needs such as, determination, ambition, and motivation. If Pablo Escobar had been born in a more stable society he could have been quite successful but the negativity that surrounded Escobar at a young age wrapped him into a life of crime while he was still a child.

Contrary, to what Media may lead you to believe Pablo Escobar is said to be known as a loving father. Although many sources argue that Pablo Escobar seemed to have an inclination for younger girls when he was 26 he fell in love with Maria Victoria Henao Vellejo who was only 15 at the time. " Pablo went to the local bishop to seek approval for the marriage and had 2 children with Maria. They remained together until Pablo's death however, it is said that he had constant affairs, most frequently with underage girls. "

(Christopher W. Minster) Pablo's affairs with underage girls affects the perception on him as a Robin Hood character, because having an affair is not socially acceptable and to make it even worse it was with an underage girl.

Even though the Colombia government was always persecuting him, he did almost everything to spend important moments with his son Juan Pablo

Escobar. His assistance to his child's birthdays and first communion were <https://assignbuster.com/pablo-escobar-was-a-modern-day-robin-hood-history-essay/>

celebrations that Pablo never missed. Juan's first communion took place in a building call Monaco. This was the perfect moment for his enemies to get rid of Pablo. A car full of dynamite exploded. Luckily the party was over and nothing happened. Pablo did not give up; he ran away knowing they were trying to kill him. He called all his family members and told them to be very careful. They were his family; they would also suffer the consequences of this war. Pablo Escobar kept his family member innocent and unaware of the majority of stuff that went on until the very end of his life.

(Channel H. , 2002)

Many sources say Pablo Escobar was a good Family man and saw the good qualities of Escobar when looking at his dedication to his family, he protected his family from the life of crime that he was apart of instead of bringing them in like many typical Drug Families. The reason Pablo did this could be for many reasons, he did not want his children to see him as a criminal, Pablo felt that his kids were too young, or he simply did not want his kids to live the same life of crime as he did. (Grajales, 2005)

The ambitions Pablo had is what made Escobar unlike any other drug lord at this time; he was fearless and this is how he quickly became head of a strict drug-structured organization. Pablo had already started selling marijuana but it wasn't till the mid 1970s till he started to make his name in the cocaine business. He entered the Cocaine Trade 1970s that he entered the cocaine trade and began buying high-grade coca paste from Bolivia and Peru. He processed it into cocaine, which he transported to America for distribution. Escobar's drug business began to grow and, requiring a greater workforce,

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(Pablo Escobar Gavira-Archivos, 2000) In 1975, Escobar offered to sell 14 kilos of coke to Medellin drug boss Fabio Restrepo, they just saw him to be just some local street thug which was a huge underestimate. They formed an alliance and Escobar was now part of the Medellin Cartel. The underestimation proved to be lethal because just three weeks later, Fabio Restrepo; head of the Drug Family was found dead. Escobar then informed the Medellin drug cartel that they now worked for him and quickly turned that cartel into arguably the most powerful drug family at that time. Not only did this cartel control the majority of drugs trafficking but it was known was one of the most ruthless criminal organizations at this time. (Pablo Escobar Gavira-Archivos, 2000)

Escobar's rise was opposed by many honest politicians, judges and policemen, who did not like the growing influence of this street thug. Escobar had a way of dealing with his enemies: he called it "plata o plomo," literally, silver or lead. (Pablo Escobar Gavira-Archivos, 2000)

" Usually, if a politician, judge or policeman got in his way, he would first attempt to bribe them, and if that didn't work, he would order them killed, occasionally including their family in the hit. His bribes were usually quite generous so, it was easy for a politician or judge to become corrupt especially with his intimidation methods and reputation." (Pablo Escobar Gavira-Archivos, 2000) He introduced a new level of violence and terror and exploited the fears of his crew and family. Most often the officials were not corrupted because of a lack of character but, agreeing with Pablo was more of a tactic of survival because if they did not cooperate they would be injured or even killed. This puts the Robin Hood qualities into question because he <https://assignbuster.com/pablo-escobar-was-a-modern-day-robin-hood-history-essay/>

was corrupting innocent people using fear and was willing to do whatever it took to get these politicians to ignore the trafficking. Escobar's actual characteristics come in to question repeatedly when we analyze his tactics.

(Pardo, 2000)

Pablo Escobar was not always invincible as a matter of fact,

Escobar's first serious run-in with the law was in 1976, when he and some associates were caught returning from a drug run to Ecuador. Escobar ordered the killing of the arresting officers, and the case was soon dropped. Later, at the height of his power, Escobar's wealth and ruthlessness made it almost impossible for Colombian authorities to bring him to justice. Every time any attempt was made to limit his power, those responsible were bribed, killed, or otherwise neutralized. (Christopher W. Minster)

After this run in with the Columbian Legal System he vowed that he would never be caught again. Pablo escalated his violence and ruthlessness in the Columbia which allowed no one to step in his path.

Escobar started making more money than anyone in Columbia before; he built an extravagant house for himself which he called a " Hacienda Napolis". He even had his own zoo, which he imported exotic animals, rhinos, hippos, zebras and other various animals. Escobar had his own planes, helicopters, and numerous amounts of cars." He was seen as invincible; he had the wealth, and the fame." (Channel H. , 2002) Again we see, a question in fitting Pablo Escobar as this Robin Hood character because of all the unnesccary luxuries that he purchases. Some one who truly cared for the

poorer classes of the country would not waste revenue to improve self image.

Pablo exemplified his terror everywhere he went, it is rumoured that he caught some one stealing silver wear from his kitchen; he then stuck the silver wear in his hands and feet and kicked him into the swimming pool in front of his entire dinner party and watched him drown. (Channel D.) Escobar used this form of terror for intimidation so anyone would know this is what happens when you steal from him. This is significant because Escobar exemplified that he did not care who was around if you betrayed him you would suffer the consequence. Also Pablo's values began to become corrupt as he gained more power he started out very Marxist but he became the richest man in Columbia so he was a target for the extremely left winged guerrillas of the mountains. (Channel H. , 2002)

The Robin Hood values that Pablo possessed began to dissolve as he quickly became the richest man in Columbia. Escobar wanted to be loved more by the people and have political power. Throughout his life he was very charitable but during his campaign it was more than ever. Escobar began to spend millions on projects for the poor people of Columbia, building houses, shelters, recreation centers and soccer pitches. Pablo had his own form of private welfare for the people of Columbia. This was significant because it was something the Government of Columbia never would have done. It is argued that Pablo Escobar was not interested in being a " political leader at all nor was he concerned what the people of Columbia thought about him he was just scared of extradition from the United States". (Channel D.) It is

hard to know whether Pablo put millions into Columbia because he
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recognized his past and knew where he came from or, was it just to promote him self to the people of Columbia. Columbia will never know whether it was all part of a manipulative plan but to this day historians argue whether he was actually interested in being so charitable or if it was just a cover up.

Extradition to the United State was the one thing the Drug Lords of Columbia feared more than anything, because they could manipulate the Columbian justice system by buying out judges or killing them but once they got to the US they were just another defendant they were willing to die rather than go to the United States .(Channel H. , 2002) In 1982 Pablo was elected to the congress as an alternate but the first time he tried to take a seat in the house he was denounced by the minister of Justice Rodrigo Lara as a notorious drug trafficker and criminal. His arrest in 1975 surfaced in the political system and was banned from the political system and many of his assets were seized. Pablo was embarrassed by Rodriquo and from that day forward he began to wage war with the state of Columbia. Three months after making the stand against Escobar, Rodrigo Lara was killed. (Channel H. , 2002) Pablos lack of remorse for the righteous judge was to not only for revenge but to show the Justice sytem what happens if you made a stand against Columbia. This truly shows Pablo Escobar's use of terror at this time and how volatile this man really was.

Pablo was mainly referred to by his brother, Roberto, as a modern day Robin Hood. Escobar often paid for low cost housing and other community necessities for the poor people of his neighbourhood. (Christopher W. Minster) Conversely, even though he had donated millions," he lead an army of adolescents, the sicarios (hired killers), boys - and girls in many cases -, <https://assignbuster.com/pablo-escobar-was-a-modern-day-robin-hood-history-essay/>

ready to kill for money, kids as young as 12 years old from the poorest slums, the same ones he showed his deep Christian charity feelings building dignified housing, schools, roads, playgrounds and, of course, employment in the Medellín Cartel.” (Rodas, 2008) However, it can be disputed that in the slums there were not many job opportunities and poverty filled the streets, so by giving these kids a job even though it is looked upon by a developed culture as extremely immoral it could be seen as an opportunity for the kids. This shows a deeper look at the Robin Hood characteristics that he possessed and begins to separate the idea of Pablo Escobar just using the slums as a mere decoy. In order to understand some of these actions you have to look at the society of Colombia itself and the state that the country was in.

Escobar built his drug trafficking industry to such an extent that he eventually controlled over 80% of the cocaine sent to America. With his own factories and an entire fleet of airplanes and ships, including two radio-controlled submarines, it has been estimated that Escobar smuggled 70 to 80 tons of cocaine from Colombia to America per month, and as much as 11 tons in each flight. In order to launder the drug money, the Medellín Cartel controlled a large amount of crooked white-collar workers, such as bankers, lawyers and extended family. The drug trafficking by Pablo Escobar can certainly be partly to blame on the current high-level of addictions of cocaine across the United States.

The United States did not really interfere with the drug trade between USA and Colombia until it began to reach the poorer classes of America.

In the early 80s cocaine began to transform the landscape of urban America, crack began to be available it was inexpensive and it was popular among the poorer classes. It had a huge impact on us policies, the poor classes, would become addicted and would be willing to do anything to get money in order to get that fix. Suddenly Drug dealers began to be seen as violent criminals, Regan signed national security directive 221, declaring drug trafficking as a threat to national security. (Channel, 2002)

By introducing this type of highly addictive drug to the lower classes of America we see the phenom of expolitation and this is not a characteristic of the Robin Hood persona that his brother gave to him.

Pablo Escobar began to feel immense pressure now due to the United States trying to extradite Escobar. The publics suspcion as to the origin of his enourmous wealth which caused American Authorities to investigate. Escobars applied typical approach to thing by trying to sway the Columian authorites towards a no extradition clause and in return he would give up the drug trade. (Channel H. , 2002)

In 1989 Escobar was listed as the seventh Richest Man in the World by Forbes magazine, with a fortune rumoured to be around \$24 billion. (Christopher W. Minster) This was never ever achieved by any criminal before; Al Capone and John Gotti were not even close to this sort of power or wealth. (Channel D.) For his own protection, Escobar bought the support of other criminals, who also acted as his guerrilla army, carrying out any violence he demanded.

Firstly, he claimed to be solely responsible for both the setting up and the huge success of the Colombian cocaine trade. Secondly, he cited his involvement in the battle for the nullification of the 1979 American-Colombian Extradition Treaty. For these reasons, he imposed a tax on other drug dealers in his area, forcing them to pay him a percentage of their profits. The extent of Escobar's crimes will never be fully known or verified. However, vast numbers of people were killed on his command. A decade later, in 1985, the Colombian Supreme Court was studying the constitutionality of Colombia's extradition treaty with the United States. It was besieged by left-wing Colombian guerrillas from the 19th of April Movement (M-19) and half the court's judges were murdered. Escobar was thought to have been responsible for this action but this was never proven. (Pablo Escobar Gavira-Archivos, 2000)

By the early 1990s, pressure on Escobar was mounting and in 1991, he approached the Colombian government to make a deal. In exchange for their guarantee of no extradition to the US, he would freely hand himself in, stop all drug trafficking and be jailed for a five-year period. The government accepted the deal, on Escobar's terms, which included being permitted to build his own 'jail', named La Catedral. (Pablo Escobar Gavira-Archivos, 2000)

Escobar's prison included a luxury complex it was the work of a professional interior for a rich bachelor. His new home included a salon with bar, several televisions and a Jacuzzi, water bed and an office that was full of all the new technological communication devices so, he could still run his drug business.

He chose the guards and it happened to be his own security." (Asprey)
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This was the secure prison that was surrounded by barbed wire fences, search lights and a minefield to reassure the public that Pablo Escobar was locked up. Again we see Pablo Escobar wasting revenue on luxuries rather than supporting the poor, it would be one thing to build a jail but, this jail was a like a palace for a king.

Everyone knew that Escobar was still running his operation from La Catedral, but in July of 1992, it came out that Escobar had ordered some disloyal underlings brought to his " prison," where they were tortured and killed. This was too much for even the Colombian government, and plans were made to transfer Escobar to a normal prison. Fearing he could be extradited, Escobar escaped and went into hiding. By late 1992, there were two organizations searching for him: the Search Bloc, a special, US-trained Colombian task force, and " Los Pepes," a shadowy organization of Escobar's enemies, made up of family members of his victims and financed by Escobar's main business rival, the Cali Cartel. (Christopher W. Minster) The sheer number of victims of Pablo Escobar's atrocities is exemplified here by the organization of his enemies in a Colombian task force. The fact that they took the initiative to create this force demonstrated the physical and psychological harm that Escobar had inflicted on many.

With Escobar gone, the Medellín Cartel quickly lost power to its ruthless rival, the Cali Cartel, which remained dominant until the Colombian government shut it down in the mid 1990's. He was killed in 1992, but Medellín, would see 42, 393 murders between 1992 and 2002, making the city the most violent of Latin America by that time. Escobar is still remembered by the poor of Medellín as a benefactor. He has been the subject of numerous <https://assignbuster.com/pablo-escobar-was-a-modern-day-robin-hood-history-essay/>

books, movies and websites, and fascination continues with this master criminal, who once ruled one of the greatest crime empires in history. (Christopher W. Minster) The years after Escobar's death have been more violent than Columbia has ever seen before, this could be related to a struggle for power. There is no King Pin like Escobar, to keep all the other criminals in line and keep the crime organized. This makes it seem like a character like Escobar is needed for a lower crime rate because it is inevitable that if one man dies the cocaine market will not come to a sudden halt.

Pablo Escobar was the first ever criminal Billionaire and cultivated the cocaine market in a multibillion dollar national market. Although the police and government cheered throughout the streets, hundreds of thousands of Columbians cried. It showed a division of Classes in Columbia the rich were celebrating while the poor people of Columbia were crying. Over 20, 000 people showed up to his funeral and people threw their selves crying and chanting at the coffin. They had felt that somebody very important in their life had died. Pablo Escobar may have been an immoral monster but to the people who loved him they looked beyond that. His mother spoke out on the day of his Funeral " I want people to remember the good things he did, because he didn't do anything wrong, he helped the poor , he built a town, a stadium and a church. He built a shelter for the homeless dying in the street; no one talks about the good things, pray for the peace of his soul"(Channel D.)

In conclusion, Escobar did donate millions to Columbia's slums whether it was building shelters, soccer fields or even providing children with
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opportunities to make money the amount of deaths linked to his drug trade and his extortion can not be overlooked. Pablo Escobar may have had the qualities of a great father and very well could have been a great legal business man if he had grown up in the right society but given his surrounding factors he became entrenched in a life of crime. Therefore to a select percentage of corrupt officials and the poor of Columbia, Pablo Escobar could be seen as a modern day Robin Hood but his violence and fear that he instilled upon the entire country can not be over looked and therefore he was more of a murderous tyrant.