

Lonely Planet

by Michelle K. Beckett

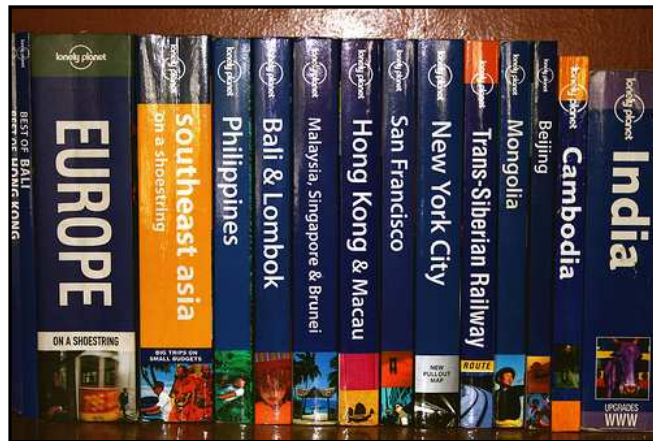


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Thomas Kohnstamm wrote about Columbia for the *Lonely Planet* travel guide ... without going to Columbia!

Thomas Kohnstamm, an author for the *Lonely Planet* travel guides, worked on more than a dozen books including their titles on Brazil, Columbia, the Caribbean, South America, Venezuela and Chile.

He claims he accepted free services, acting against company policy, and did not even visit Colombia, despite being hired to write about it.

“They didn’t pay me enough to go to Colombia. I wrote the book in San Francisco. I got the information from a chick I was dating - an intern at the Colombian Consulate.”

His new book, *Do Travel Writers Go To Hell?*, tells how he travelled South America, selling drugs to supplement his income and enjoying casual sex, sometimes in the establishments he wrote about.

Other travel writers, while not endorsing Mr Kohnstamm’s methods, agree that working in the travel-writing industry can be difficult - that writers are badly paid, and sometimes they have to cover their own costs.