

Acknowledgments

This book is the culmination of more than ten years of work. I began the journey while teaching at the Instituto de Ciencia Política (ICP) of the Catholic University of Chile in my hometown, Santiago de Chile. I continued after moving with my family back to my second home, Chicago, in the summer of 2014. Although often daunting, this intellectual expedition has been meaningful and humbling. I learned many things about Colombia's captivating history, myself, academia, and, more significantly, human nature. The kindness I have encountered along the way from my Colombian family, colleagues, students, friends, sources, and strangers, contrasts with the inhumanity I write about in this book. I confess that during the many trips I have taken over the years to Colombia, this would perplex me: the great historian David Bushnell hints at this feeling in his magisterial book, *The Making of Modern Colombia: A Nation in Spite of Itself*, widely cited in my work, in which he recounts how foreigners investigating the country all too often wrestle with how to make sense of the violence raging in a land inhabited by the warmest of people.

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