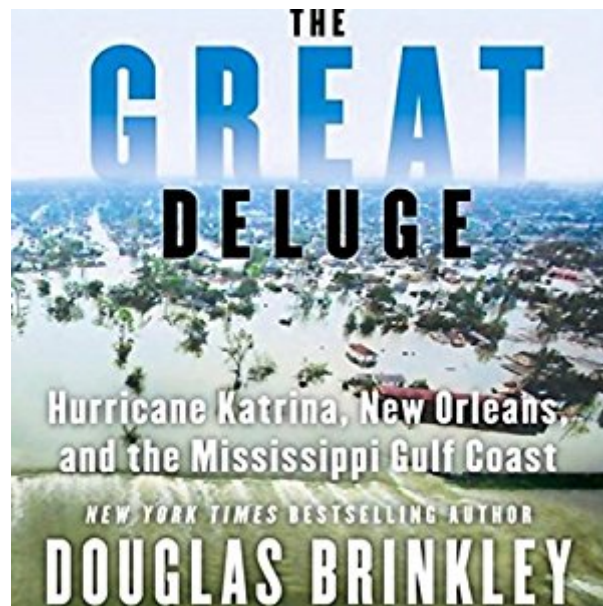


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The Great Deluge: Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, And The Mississippi Gulf Coast



Synopsis

In the span of five violent hours on August 29, 2005, Hurricane Katrina destroyed major Gulf Coast cities and flattened 150 miles of coastline. Yet those wind-torn hours represented only the first stage of the relentless triple tragedy that Katrina brought to the entire Gulf Coast from Louisiana to Mississippi to Alabama. First was the hurricane, one of the three strongest ever to make landfall in the United States -- 150 mile per hour winds, with gusts measuring more than 180 miles per hour ripping buildings to pieces. Second, the storm-surge flooding, which submerged a half million homes, creating the largest refugee crisis since the Civil War. Eighty percent of New Orleans was under water, and whole towns in southeastern Louisiana ceased to exist. And third, the human tragedy of government mismanagement, which proved as cruel as the natural disaster itself. In *The Great Deluge*, bestselling author Douglas Brinkley, a New Orleans resident and professor of history at Tulane University, rips the story of Katrina apart and relates what the category 3 hurricane was like from every point of view, while recognizing the true heroes. Throughout the book, Brinkley lets the Katrina survivors tell their own stories, masterfully allowing them to record the nightmare that was Katrina. *The Great Deluge* investigates the failure of government at each level and breaks important new stories. Packed with interviews and original research, it traces the character flaws, inexperience, and ulterior motives that allowed the Katrina disaster to turn the Gulf Coast into a scene from a war movie or a third-world documentary. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"The Great Deluge : Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans, and the Mississippi Gulf Coast" certainly pulls no punches in its across the board criticism of all concerned parties. While most at the time turned this into a societal battle of rich vs. poor, white vs. black, Author Douglas Brinkley has more than enough ammunition to aim at President Bush, Homeland Security chief Michael Chertoff, Michael Brown, the former FEMA director, Mayor Ray Nagin, and Governor Blanco. In fact a war of words has erupted between Brinkley and Nagin in light of some of the comments Brinkley makes about Nagin. Some of Brinkley's accounts needlessly border on the melodramatic. There was no extra drama that needed to be added to the actual and factual accounts of what happened to New Orleans. The human tragedy speaks for itself. Readers will experience many layers of feelings as they read the book. You'll shed tears over the loss of life, be angered by the poor response from all factions, and rejoice in the triumph of spirit in how the people endured, and how hard rescuers worked. Brinkley successfully avoids falling into politicizing this disaster and no one who reads the book thoughtfully can accuse him of having an agenda other than wanting to tell the true story. Thankfully he is smart enough to let so many of those directly involved...the survivors...and the rescuers...tell their own stories. The various running narratives, and 700 plus pages can make it a bit of a chore at times to follow but this is a story that needed to be told and told truthfully.

I have been filming a documentary regarding Hurricane Katrina and its aftermath entitled "New Orleans Story." We interviewed Mr. Brinkley when he was writing his very first chapter of The Great Deluge. Douglas was very engaged in the investigative process and was eager to learn all that we had discovered and were discovering during our one on one interviews with key players to this historical disaster. We also interviewed Douglas Brinkley a few days before he released his book to the public. Having now read the book, I must verify through our own on-camera interviews with many of the same individuals (such as Mayor Nagin, Governor Blanco, former FEMA Director Michael Brown), that Douglas' reported accounts have merit. The information was taken directly from those who were in the best position to opine. Yes it is true that others have different perspectives, but we have yet to see any evidence that dispute the accuracy of the content of The Great Deluge. As a fellow New Orleanian who also worked to chronicle the events in as much of a contemporaneous manner as possible, I wish to congratulate Douglas Brinkley on his efforts. I further strongly recommend The Great Deluge.

Speaking as a first responder who has witnessed many of these events personally, I must say that no other individual has shed more light on the true events following the aftermath of Hurricane

Katrina as historian Douglas Brinkley. Cutting through the governmental cover-ups, deception and lies, Brinkley gets to the heart of the matter in this refreshingly honest and straight forward account of what was really happening at the time. Brinkley allows the reader to share the human ordeals of the true heroes as he recounts the personal experiences of Coast Guard and Wildlife & Fisheries personnel, and citizen first responders. These are their stories as seen through their eyes and told in their own words. Unafraid to hold accountable those still in power, *The Great Deluge* allows the reader to escape the masterful spin of FEMA and The Bush Administration as well as attempts to hide Ray Nagin's mental breakdown during the Crescent City's most crucial hours. Thank-you, Mr. Brinkley. You have given your city, country, and state one of the greatest gifts they could receive, the truth.

Brinkley succeeds at honestly and objectively recounting what happened, what went right, and what went wrong during what will long be remembered as a moment when government at all levels failed us, but ordinary citizens rose to the occasion. Nobody who deserves criticism is spared, and that is how it should be. The opening portion of the book describes how the Louisiana SPCA efficiently evacuated hundreds of animals well in advance of the storm. The subtle message? A small private organization made up mostly of volunteers had a coherent and effective evacuation plan, but the government did not. More than just a recitation of what happened, Brinkley describes at length the history of New Orleans, particularly with respect to more than a century of attempting to protect the city from flooding. He also covers the gradual coastal erosion that made New Orleans much more vulnerable to catastrophic flooding. This helps the reader better understand why the city flooded when Katrina hit. As the title notes, Brinkley also covers the Mississippi Gulf Coast, which was so often lost in media reports at the time, partly due to lack of access to those areas and also due to the large scale drama unfolding at the same time in New Orleans. This is an important book. The details of this chapter in American history need to be accurately recorded for ourselves and for future generations. Brinkley has succeeded in doing just that.

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