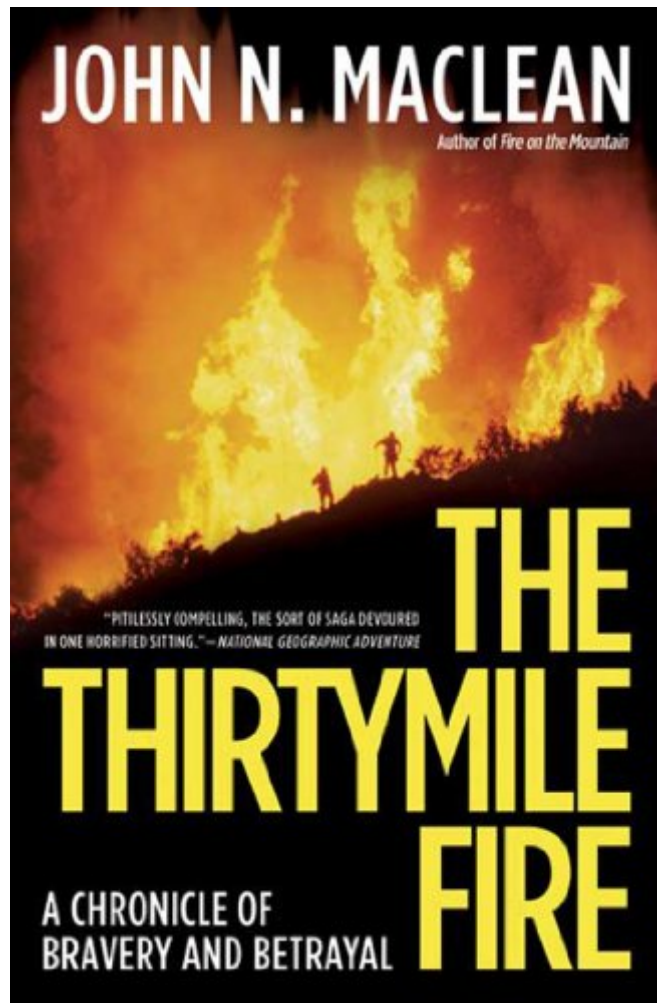


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The Thirtymile Fire: A Chronicle Of Bravery And Betrayal



Synopsis

A riveting account of the deadly Thirtymile fire and the controversy and recriminations that raged in its aftermath, from our premier chronicler of wildfires and those who fight them. The Thirtymile fire in the remote North Cascade range near the Canadian border in Washington began as a simple mop-up operation. In a few hours, a series of catastrophic errors led to the entrapment and deaths of four members of the fire crew—two teen-age girls and two young men. Each had brought order and meaning to their lives by joining the fire world. Then the very flames they pursued turned on them, extinguishing their lives. When the victims were blamed for their own deaths, the charge brought a storm of controversy that undermined the firefighting community. Continuing a tradition established in his previous books, and by his father Norman's *Young Men and Fire*, John N. Maclean serves as an unflinching guide to the rogue fire's unexpected violence—which is almost matched by the passions released by the official verdict of the blaze. Weaving together the astonishing stories told by the witnesses, the victims' family members, and the official reports, Maclean produces a dramatic narrative of a catastrophe that has changed the way fire is fought. More than anything, it is a story of humanity at risk when wildfire, ancient and unpredictable, breaks loose.

Book Information

File Size: 708 KB

Print Length: 272 pages

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co.; Reprint edition (November 12, 2013)

Publication Date: November 12, 2013

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00FCRLGRW

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #247,035 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #35

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Customer Reviews

This is a comprehensive review of the ThirtyMile Wildland Fire in 2001 that claimed the lives of four Federal Forest Service firefighters compiled from all the survivors, investigators, government officials, witnesses, and families affected by this incident. The Official Report of this fire laid blame on the firefighters themselves for the loss of their lives, and the report made was tailored to protect upper-level managers and the Forest Service from blame. Mr. Maclean sorts through all of it and presents a clear picture of the events that transpired before, during, and after the incident where the time of the fire, the lack of resources, communication breakdowns, environmental rules, fatigue, failure to follow fire safety rules, and tunnel vision led to this tragedy. This book addresses questions that were not asked in the official report. It goes on to describe what happened to those in charge, and what did not happen to those administrators involved. As a result of this fire, along with the 1994 Storm King Fire that killed 14 federal wildland firefighters, this book describes how through legislation the investigation responsibilities for large incidents shifted from in-house Forest Service to unprepared and unqualified outside government investigators. As a result of this political shift an overzealous US Attorney leveled four charges of manslaughter and five charges of lying to investigators about what happened at the fire, almost five years after the incident happened. Mr. Maclean also chronicles the almost absolute abandonment of the firefighters and survivors involved in this incident, the heartless measures the Forest Service showed to families involved, and the failure of the wildland fire system involving the US Forest Service.

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