

Run to Failure: BP and the Making of the Deepwater Horizon Disaster

Abrahm Lustgarten



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It was Big Oil's nightmare moment, and the dominoes began falling years before the well was drilled.

Two decades ago, British Petroleum, a venerable and storied corporation, was running out of oil reserves. Along came a new CEO of vision and vast ambition, John Browne, who pulled off one of the greatest corporate turnarounds in history.

BP bought one company after another and then relentlessly fired employees and cut costs. It skipped safety procedures, pumped toxic chemicals back into the ground, and let equipment languish, even while Browne claimed a new era of environmentally sustainable business as his own. For a while the strategy worked, making BP one of the most profitable corporations in the world. Then it all began to unravel, in felony convictions for environmental crimes and in one deadly accident after another. Employees and regulators warned that BP's problems, unfixed, were spinning out of control, that another disaster?bigger and deadlier?was inevitable. Nobody was listening.

Having reported on business and the energy industry for nearly a decade, Abrahm Lustgarten uses interviews with key executives, former government investigators, and whistle-blowers along with his exclusive access to BP's internal documents and emails to weave a spellbinding investigative narrative of hubris and greed well before the gulf oil spill.

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