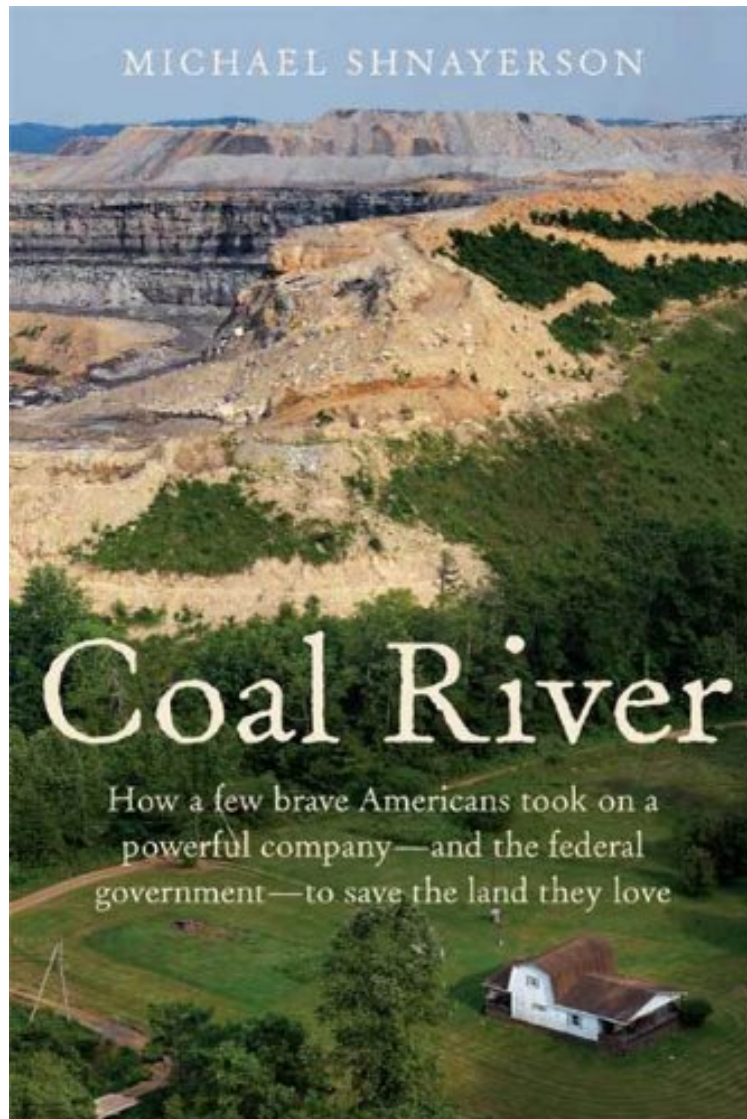


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# Coal River: How a Few Brave Americans Took On a Powerful Company - and the Federal Government - to Save The Land They Love

*Michael Shnayerson*

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**Michael Shnayerson : Coal River: How a Few Brave Americans Took On a Powerful Company - and the Federal Government - to Save The Land They Love** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Coal River: How a Few Brave Americans Took On a Powerful Company - and the Federal Government - to Save The Land They Love:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent! A must read! By Dust Jacket Accurate and extensive detail. You really get to know the people, as if they are characters in a novel. You will be shocked by how the coal companies violate their workers rights and how they disregard the local citizens' health and homesteads. You will see the heartache the coal industry inflicts on the people who work for them, the heartache they inflict on the citizens who live near their mining operations and the destruction they are reaping on the environment. You will also see how the industry's money buys politicians, local and federal. Their wealth puts them above the law, allowing them to commit egregious violations to which they suffer few consequences. If you want to know the full truth about the coal industry, you must read Coal River. It will leave you speechless. 19 of 20 people found the following review helpful. How West Virginia is Being Destroyed in the Name of Greed and the Fight to Stop It By Frederick S. Goethel Coal River is the story of the practice of mountaintop removal mining in the Coal River Valley of West Virginia and of the people who tried to stop the practice. It also examines Don Blankenship, CEO and Chairman of Massey Energy who is considered by all involved to be the one person responsible for the most destruction. For those not familiar with the technique, mountaintop removal mining involves literally blasting several hundred feet or more from the top of a mountain so that the coal can be extracted much more easily. The spoils of the removal are dumped over the edge of the mountain into streams that tend to run along the valley floor. That causes pollution and, in many cases, the entire closing of the stream which changes the entire hydrology of the area. In theory, the mountains are supposed to be replaced to a near natural form at the end of mining, but that rarely happens, leaving a moonscape of rock and debris that will take thousands of years to remediate on its own. The coal companies have an agenda and will hardly allow the law to slow them down. After reading the book I felt sick. The mountains of West Virginia are one of the prettiest places in the United States, and yet our government has been caught handing over permits for a process that is clearly illegal under the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts. The courts are of little use....they, too, have been bought by big coal. This story of the courageous fight of the men and women of the valley is a must read if you care for the environment of the planet at all. It is well written and very inspirational that such a small number of people were willing to take on Big Coal. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. If you want to understand all areas of destruction caused ... By Bobbie Jolf you want to understand all areas of destruction caused mountain top removal in the coal fields of the Appalachian Mountains, this is the book to read. It tells the tragic story of what coal companies have done to the people, land and the environmental impact.

One of America's most dramatic environmental battles is unfolding in southern West Virginia. Coal companies are blasting the mountains, decapitating them for coal. The forested ridge tops and valley streams of Appalachia; one of the country's natural treasures; are being destroyed, along with towns and communities. An entire culture is disappearing, and to this day, most Americans have no idea it's happening. Michael Shnayerson first traveled to the coal fields four years ago, on assignment for Vanity Fair. There he met an inspiring young lawyer named Joe Lovett, who was fighting mountaintop removal in court with a series of brilliant and daring lawsuits. He also met Judy Bonds, whose grassroots group, the Coal River Mountain Watch, was speaking out in a region where talking truth to power was both brave and dangerous. The two had joined forces to take on Massey Energy, the largest and most aggressive of the coal companies, and its swaggering, notorious chairman, Don Blankenship. Coal River is Shnayerson's account of this dramatic struggle. From courtroom to boardroom, forest clearing to factory floor, Shnayerson gives us a novelistic and compelling portrait of the people who risked their reputations and livelihoods in the fight against King Coal.

From Publishers Weekly Through vivid first-person reporting and a thorough culling of court transcripts, newspaper clippings and corporate reports, Vanity Fair contributing editor Shnayerson (The Killers Within) has crafted an incriminating indictment of the Appalachian King Coal industry in West Virginia, and of the man he defines as its rapacious kingpin, Massey Energy's CEO, Don Blankenship. The author's sympathies lie clearly with opponents of mountaintop mining, most prominently young attorney Joe Lovett and citizen activist Judy Bonds. Both have fought against a form of mining that shears off the tops of hills and dumps rubble into valleys and streams; a process abetted by the collusion of the state's often-lackadaisical Department of Environmental Protection, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' propensity to grant stream-destroying permits without oversight and the easing of environmental controls by the Bush administration. Shnayerson's compelling take on toxic mining methods and their heartrending impact on Appalachian inhabitants and their culture, has a wider focus than Erik Reece's 2006 title, Lost Mountain, which reported on one mountaintop's destruction, and strong echoes of the stomach-churning legal machinations recounted in Jonathan Harr's 1995 bestseller, A Civil Action. Copyright copy; Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Praise for The Killers Within: