



# Thunder on the Mountain: Death at Massey and the Dirty Secrets Behind Big Coal

*Peter A. Galuszka*

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**"Scathing exposé of the coal industry."**

**--*The New York Times Book Review***

On April 5, 2010, an explosion ripped through Massey Energy's Upper Big Branch Mine, killing twenty-nine coal miners. This tragedy was the deadliest mine disaster in the United States in forty years—a disaster that never should have happened. These deaths were rooted in the cynical corporate culture of Massey and its notorious former CEO Don Blankenship, and were part of an endless cycle of poverty, exploitation, and environmental abuse that has dominated the Appalachian coalfields since coal was first discovered there. And the cycle continues unabated as coal companies bury the most insidious dangers deep underground, all in search of higher profits, and hide the true costs from regulators, unions, and investors alike.

But the disaster at Upper Big Branch goes beyond the coalfields of West Virginia. It casts a global shadow, calling into bitter question why coal miners in the United States are sacrificed to erect cities on the other side of the world, why the coal wars have been allowed to rage, polarizing the country, and how the world's voracious appetite for energy is satisfied at such horrendous cost.

With *Thunder on the Mountain*, Peter A. Galuszka pieces together the true story of greed and negligence behind the tragedy at the Upper Big Branch Mine, and in doing so he has created a devastating portrait of an entire industry that exposes the coal-black motivations that led to the death of twenty-nine miners and fuel the ongoing war for the world's energy future.

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