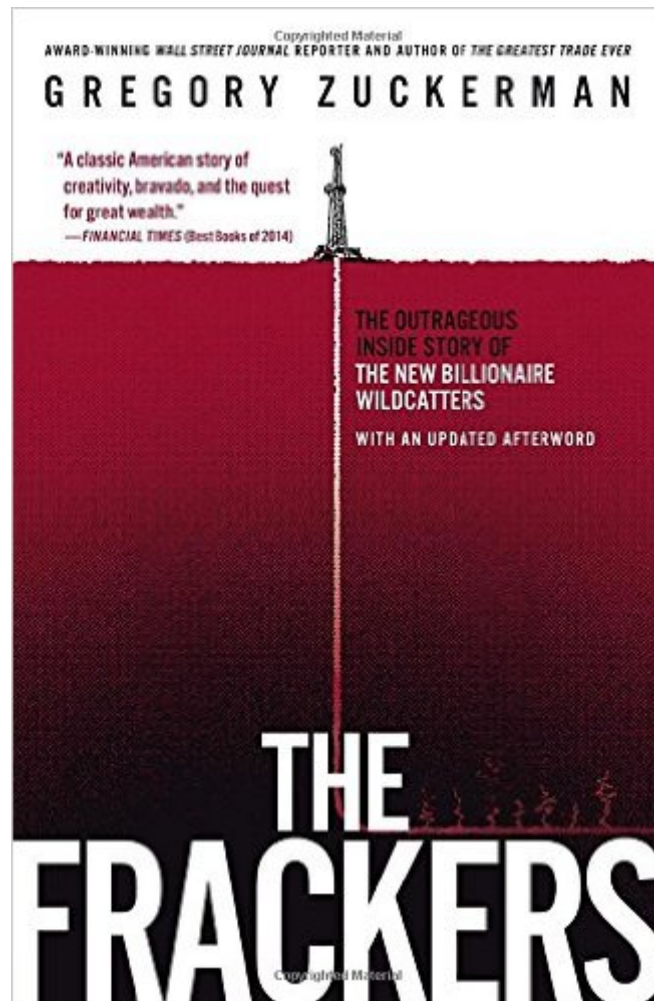


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The Frackers: The Outrageous Inside Story Of The New Billionaire Wildcatters



Synopsis

“A lively, exciting, and definitely thought-provoking book.” —Booklist
Things looked grim for American energy in 2006, but a handful of wildcatters were determined to tap massive deposits of oil and gas that giants like Exxon and Chevron had ignored. They risked everything on a new process called fracking. Within a few years, they solved America’s dependence on imported energy, triggered a global environmental controversy, and made and lost astonishing fortunes. No one understands the frackers’—their ambitions, personalities, and foibles—better than Wall Street Journal reporter Gregory Zuckerman. His exclusive access drives this dramatic narrative, which stretches from North Dakota to Texas to Wall Street.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Because I live in an oilfield community and because I don’t rely on the oilfield to put food on the table, I found this book extremely interesting. I’m an educator who has at times supplemented my income by working summers and weekends in the oilfield. Since I had to have a Commercial Drivers Licence to drive a bus as a part of my real job, it wasn’t much of a stretch to get a tractor/trailer and tanker endorsement and haul water into and out of the oilfield. I’ve even hauled water to frac jobs. I’ve hauled water away from frac jobs. Thankfully I wasn’t around much during frac jobs as they are incredibly noisy. This gives me a little different perspective maybe than the avg reader. I’ve heard of Chesapeake and Sandridge. Actually know some people who work for them. It was incredibly interesting to learn how those two companies came in to being. Judging from the book I’d say that

Awbrey McClendon and Tom Ward are borderline crooked, but my limited experience in the oilfield tells me that that's pretty normal behavior at the top of the ladder. There couldn't be as many crooked people at the bottom of the ladder if it didn't get a little crooked as you went up. I've heard of EOG and XTO and Devon. I know some people who work for them as well, so it was interesting to see how they fit into the picture. I would've liked to have been a fly on the wall when Harold Hamm met with Obama in the WH. I'd like to think that Obama wouldn't have the gall to tell Hamm, "You didn't build that." but I'd probably be wrong. Oil and Water to the extreme. My only complaint about the book is that I think it's very difficult for east coast writers to fully understand Texas and Oklahoma culture. Zuckerman missed a few details that I caught, I'm sure there's more.

This is the best book for non-experts who want a good read about the world of fracking, at least until Russell's "The Boom" comes out. It is readable, clear, and tells a good story. Zuckerman ably weaves together multiple strands of a complex story, and his focus on the colorful personalities involved will keep you interested. At the same time, there are drawbacks to the book. Depending on what you are looking for, it may not be the book for you. The Frackers is a group biography, the story of a single group of people: Aubrey McClendon, Tom Ward, Mark Papa, Harold Hamm, and George Mitchell among others. Although it focuses on their time developing horizontal drilling, fracking, and improved methods of surveying for tight oil, the book also dwells on their biographies, from childhood onward. Zuckerman is careful not to become a mouthpiece for these men, but it is clear that his narrative is guided by their story as they want it told. This is their story, not fracking's story if you see what I mean. As a result readers who are interested in the technology behind fracking, the geology associated with it, or the environmental controversies surrounding it will be disappointed with how little time these topics get. At times -- such as when Zuckerman explains that uranium is a fuel for nuclear power -- you feel like he isn't taking his audience seriously. It's simply not an overview of the entire field of fracking which, to be fair, it doesn't exactly claim to be. At 400 pages, you get the feeling that Zuckerman can't resist a good story -- and there is more than one in here that could have been cut to make the book tighter and more focused. The result is prose that is occasionally repetitive and sometimes wanders off into tangents -- albeit interesting ones.

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