



THE CROWN PUBLISHING GROUP

September 2013

“**Trapped Under the Sea** is a heartbreaking tale of real-life bravery, real-life bungling, and real-life tragedy. Neil Swidey is a terrific storyteller.”

—Elizabeth Kolbert, author of *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*

“Thrilling and beautifully told, **Trapped Under the Sea** delivers us into a dangerous and mysterious world, a place that speaks to our darkest fears and where heroes work, as Swidey so masterfully shows us, just beneath the surface of our everyday lives.”

—Robert Kurson, author of *Shadow Divers*

“With the pacing and feel of a special-ops adventure and the insight of a public-policy investigation, Swidey details the [...] fateful mission, the horrors of the ordeal, and its aftermath.”

—*Booklist*, starred review

“Gripping . . . This virtuoso performance combines insights into massive engineering projects, corporate litigation, environmental science, and cutthroat free-market behavior with vivid personal stories.”

—*Publishers Weekly*, starred review

“**Trapped Under the Sea** is extraordinary. It bears comparison with *The Perfect Storm* in its brilliant evocation of everyday, working-class men thrust into a harrowing, at times heroic confrontation with death and disaster.”

—Dennis Lehane, author of *Live by Night* and *Shutter Island*

“This book will take you on a journey into a fascinating but little-known world—it’s the anatomy of a tragedy, a dramatic tale with a cast of vividly drawn characters, superbly written and researched.”

—Jonathan Harr, author of *A Civil Action* and *The Lost Painting*

“A marvel of masterful reporting and suspenseful writing.”

—Mitchell Zuckoff, author of *Frozen in Time* and *Lost in Shangri-La*

“A masterfully reported, grippingly written, and moving case study of how the emotional way we assess risk can lead to deadly mistakes. Nearly everyone in this sad story, driven by their own unique motivations, misjudged a deadly danger that was staring them in the face, and the results were tragic. There are lessons here, for all of us.”

—David Ropeik, author of *Risk!*

“**Trapped Under the Sea** offers vital insights into how organizations work—or fail to—and how very smart people can make very bad decisions. Neil Swidey’s riveting account of the Deer Island disaster should be essential reading for anyone in a position of leadership. I couldn’t put it down.”

—Amy Edmondson, Novartis Professor of Leadership and Management, Harvard Business School, and author of *Teaming*

“A fascinating, sympathetic, and suspenseful look at a doomed, high-risk engineering job, the working class men who dared to undertake it, and its ripple effect on the survivors. Claustrophobic and compelling.”

—Chuck Hogan, author of *Devils in Exile* and *The Town*

Dear Editor/Reviewer,

Boston Harbor was once a national embarrassment, blackened by the smothering amounts of sewage and sludge dumped into it every day. To transform the nation’s filthiest urban harbor into its cleanest, the region’s wastewater treatment system had to be completely overhauled—a staggeringly complicated and ambitious project. The mammoth, successful cleanup of the harbor is a reminder that the government remains capable of doing great things to improve the public good—but at what cost? **TRAPPED UNDER THE SEA: One Engineering Marvel, Five Men, and a Disaster Ten Miles into the Darkness** by Neil Swidey (Crown, on sale February 18) explores the project’s deadly consequences.

On a clear summer day in 1999, five commercial divers entered a nearly 10-mile-long horizontal tunnel—the longest of its kind in the world—that was bored into the bedrock hundreds of feet beneath the ocean floor. Their job was to solve the final logistical challenge that had plagued the harbor project for

years, testing the patience and resources of all the parties involved. In this oxygen-starved, totally quiet, pitch-black and claustrophobic environment, the divers' mission turned into a harrowing race to get out alive.

A morality tale for the 21st century, **TRAPPED UNDER THE SEA** explores how designers and engineers—emboldened by new technology and pressured by governments and corporations to address a growing population's rapacious needs—are pushing the limits of the possible. Yet no matter how impressive an engineer's solution may look on a computer screen, it always falls to a bunch of workers in hard hats to carry it out. An intimate narrative populated by compelling, real-life characters, **TRAPPED UNDER THE SEA** is a probing investigation into how the world around us really operates. It is also about human risk—how it is calculated, discounted, and transferred—and the failures of leadership that can lead to tragedies like this one.

For five years, Swidey immersed himself in every aspect of the Boston Harbor project, from the hard-driving lives of commercial divers and the otherworldly subculture of the “sandhogs” who dig tunnels, to the complicated quarters of civil engineering and corporate litigation. To untangle the intricacies of the story, he delved into research spanning such diverse topics as mega-project design and construction, environmental science, diving, oxygen deprivation and physiology, organizational behavior, PTSD, and even the dynamics of high-risk NASA missions. Swidey also interviewed all the major players, including the surviving divers—none of whom had ever spoken publicly about their ordeal.

I look forward to speaking with you about a review and/or interview.

Regards,



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