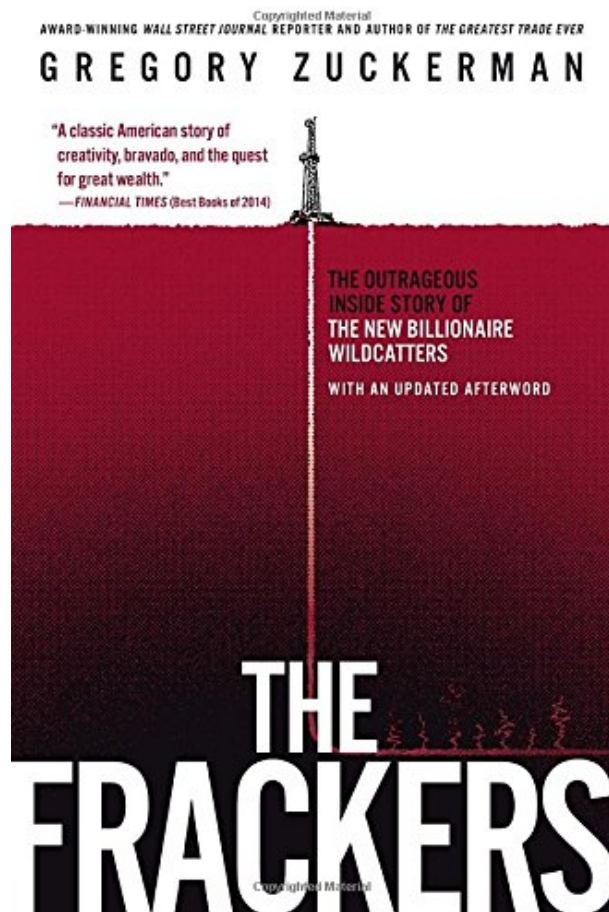


THE FRACKERS: THE OUTRAGEOUS INSIDE STORY OF THE NEW BILLIONAIRE WILDCATTERS BY GREGORY ZUCKERMAN



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AWARD-WINNING WALL STREET JOURNAL REPORTER AND AUTHOR OF *THE GREATEST TRADE EVER*

GREGORY ZUCKERMAN

"A classic American story of
creativity, bravado, and the quest
for great wealth."

—*FINANCIAL TIMES* (Best Books of 2014)



THE OUTRAGEOUS
INSIDE STORY OF
THE NEW BILLIONAIRE
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WITH AN UPDATED AFTERWORD

THE FRACKERS

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From Booklist

Fans of the lively, character-driven nonfiction of writers like Kurt Eichenwald and Ben Mezrich should welcome this book with open arms. It's a potentially dry story: a bunch of guys try to make a lot of money by hammering subterranean rock formations (shale, mostly) with liquid, breaking them up, allowing the trapped-in natural gas to come to the surface. This is hydraulic fracturing, otherwise known as fracking, and, in Zuckerman's hands, the topic generates a surprisingly entertaining story about Big Men with Big Ideas, the highly competitive (and, in some cases, increasingly desperate) search for a new and potentially highly profitable source of energy. Zuckerman also explores the often passionate and outspoken opposition to the drilling procedure (for some, fracking doesn't just sound like a dirty word; it is one), although he doesn't come down on one side or the other. He shows us the beneficial side of fracking and the potentially environmentally disastrous side, and lets us find our own ground to stand on. A lively, exciting, and definitely thought-provoking book. --David Pitt

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“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.

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53 of 54 people found the following review helpful.

Remarkably detailed yet thoroughly readable

By david m feinman

I had no idea "fracking" had its origins in the nineteenth century or that "moonlighting" came from the early practice of the clandestine use of explosives for drilling set off at night. More importantly to anyone who wants to understand the positives (cheap energy & domestic jobs) and the negatives (possible pollution & environmental risks) is the balanced way Greg Zuckerman explores the history, pros & cons of what is

arguably the most important economic issue of the next ten years. He does a great job of profiling the early wildcatters looking for a new way to release energy from the bowels of the earth, capturing the romance and swashbuckling personalities of some of these larger than life characters. At the same time he understands and illustrates the financial side and implications of the actions taken by these companies as they morphed from tiny E&P outfits to energy behemoths risking billions of investor dollars. My favorite sections deal with Aubrey McClendon and the story of Chesapeake Energy and Charif Souki the founder of Cheniere Energy who has the audacity to conceive of the United States as an EXPORTER of natural gas and energy to the world a few short years after politicians and pundits decried American dependence on foreign energy imports.

It's a remarkable story told remarkably well. If you want to understand energy dynamics going forward in the 21st century, this is an incredibly useful guidebook.

38 of 40 people found the following review helpful.

Live from the Permian Basin

By Pendejo Grande

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. He talks about a manager at Chevron being different from all the rest of the managers because he was an outsider. The guy in question started at Gulf which was acquired by Chevron in about '82 or so. That's like calling someone who was born in Alaska in '57 an outsider. Also, he referred to West Texas Intermediate as West Texas International. Kind of a glaring mistake for one of the world's two benchmark crudes. I coached across town from MOJO during the year that Buzz Bissinger spent in Odessa when he wrote "Friday Night Lights". I actually chatted him up at a New Year's eve party that year. For the most part, he got it all right. The book was factual. But he never really understood the culture of the community of Odessa. And because of that I feel like he misrepresented the community to a nationwide audience. The movie based on the book was a bad caricature. Based on the two errors noted above, I'm guessing that Zuckerman's book is pretty damned factual, but I have some doubts as to whether he can truly have the cultural understanding that it takes to completely close the deal. He may be misrepresenting the top end of the oil patch to his nationwide audience somewhat.

28 of 33 people found the following review helpful.

This book is funny, entertaining & detailed - basically another amazing book from Zuckerman.

By M. Pomada

Much like 'The Greatest Trade Ever', this book is about bucking the odds, high risk/high return, near misses & making amazing breakthroughs. It's much more about the unique entrepreneurial people involved than it is about the science behind a process that is leading the US back to energy production self-sufficiency. The author is unparalleled at exploring these characters while weaving together the details of a very disparate, but wildly entertaining story about a group of people who essentially changed the world. One aspect I really enjoyed was the humor. There are laugh-out-loud moments in the book within the details of these compelling, quirky people. Hilarious. It keeps you hooked on the characters & is very compelling to read.

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