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The Ravaging Tide: Strange Weather, Future Katrinas, and the Coming Death of America's Coastal Cities

Mike Tidwell

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If, like many Americans, you believe the ongoing tragedy of Hurricane Katrina was a once-in-a-lifetime fluke, you need to read this book. In the coming years and decades, the safety of your region, your town, your home may depend on the warnings you'll encounter on these pages. That's because the exact same conditions that created the Katrina catastrophe and destroyed New Orleans are being replicated right now along virtually every inch of U.S. coastline.

In *The Ravaging Tide*, Mike Tidwell, a renowned advocate for the environment and an award-winning journalist, issues a call to arms and confronts us with some unsettling facts. Consider:

- In the next seventy-five years, much of the Florida peninsula could lie under ocean water.
- So could much of Lower Manhattan, including all of the hallowed ground zero area.
- Major hurricanes like Katrina, scientists say, are becoming much more frequent and more powerful.
- Glacier National Park in Montana will have to change its name, as it is rapidly losing all of its thirty-five remaining glaciers.
- The snows atop Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa, so memorably evoked in the Hemingway story, have already disappeared.

The fault, Tidwell argues, lies mostly with the U.S. government and the energy choices it has encouraged Americans to make over the decades. Those policies are now actively bringing rising seas and gigantic hurricanes -- the lethal forces that killed the Big Easy -- crashing into every coastal city in the country and indeed the world. The Bush administration's own reports and studies (some of which it has tried to suppress) explicitly predict more intense storms and up to three feet of sea-level rise by 2100 due to planetary warming. The danger is clear: Whether the land sinks three feet per century (as in New Orleans over the past 100 years) or sea levels rise three feet per century (as in the rest of the world over the next 100 years), the resulting calamity is the same.

Although Mike Tidwell sounds the clarion in *The Ravaging Tide*, this is ultimately an optimistic book, one that offers a clear path to a healthier and safer world for us and our descendants. He writes of trend-setting U.S. states like New York and California that are actively cutting greenhouse gases. And he heeds his own words: In one delightful personal chapter, he takes us on a tour of his suburban Washington, D.C., home and demonstrates how he and many of his neighbors have weaned themselves from the fossil-fuel lifestyle. Even when the government is slow to change, there are steps we as families can take to, yes, change the world.

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