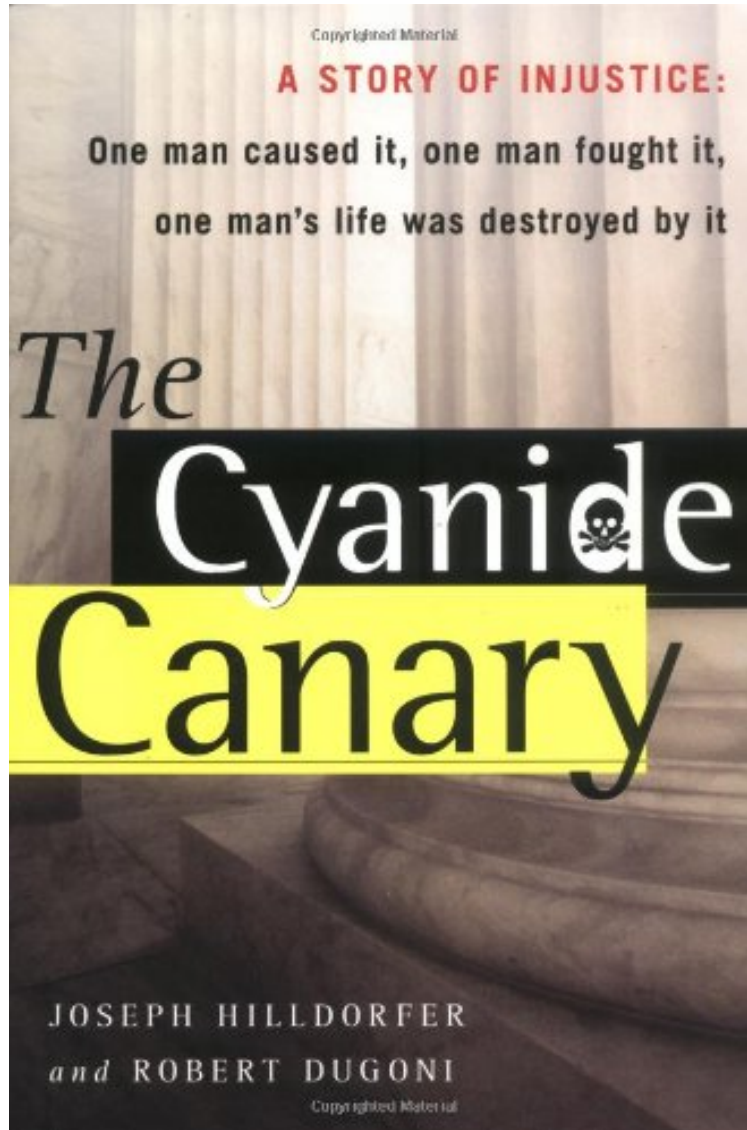


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The Cyanide Canary

Joseph Hilldorfer, Robert Dugoni
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Joseph Hilldorfer, Robert Dugoni : The Cyanide Canary before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Cyanide Canary:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Recommended if you are interested in a story based on an actual criminal environmental case by a Special Agent in the US EPABy A CustomerGood story line based on an actual criminal environmental case investigated by a Special Agent of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.1 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Interesting and informativeBy William MeadThe Cyanide Canary: A True

Story of Injustice is a detailed and straightforward account of the environmental and worker-related crimes of Allan Elias and the arduous prosecution that follows. The story, told as a third-person narrative, mostly from the viewpoint of a lead investigator on the case, portrays the difficulties and frustrations of enforcing environmental laws. I found the account of the tragic circumstances gripping, though the pace was a little slow as a result of the detailed level of presentation. The authors have made good choices of material to present, including some background on each of the characters and some discussion of other environmental crime prosecutions to give the reader some perspective. The writing and editing were very good, overall: clear, consistent, and easy to follow. The story had a healthy dose of compassion for the victim and a good level of suspense. However, I have two minor criticisms. First, the authors included quite a bit of build-up for the testimony and analysis by Dr. Joe Lowry, but gave very short shrift to his testimony at the trial, leaving me wondering exactly what he testified, and how the defense attempted to defuse his effect on the trial's outcome. Second, throughout the book, "plea" is used as a verb, which annoyed me each time I had to insert "plead" instead. I think the book would appeal to readers who like to read non-fictional investigation and court stories, and/or are interested in how the US EPA and DOJ handled one serious case of gross environmental crime. The book leaves its readers with some challenging, open questions about environmental protection and laws. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Eathral This was different and a little hard to follow at points but definitely worth reading.

"The Cyanide Canary" is the riveting true story of a horrific crime -- of a brave young man left for dead, an unscrupulous business mogul, and the relentless EPA investigator who fought to overcome injustice. On a crisp summer morning in Soda Springs, Idaho, twenty-year-old Scott Dominguez kissed his fiancée goodbye and went to work for Allan Elias, the owner of Evergreen Resources, an enterprise Dominguez thought was in the business of producing fertilizer from mining waste. A former high school wrestler blessed with Tom Cruise-like good looks, Dominguez seemed to have unlimited potential, but by eleven o'clock that morning he was fighting for his life, pulled unconscious from a cyanide-laced storage tank and not expected to live through the night. In Seattle, Special Agent Joseph Hilldorfer of the Environmental Protection Agency was given the job of finding out what happened to Dominguez and why. Initially Hilldorfer did not want the case, still frustrated by an intense two-year investigation that concluded with corporate polluters walking out of a federal courthouse free. But as he learned more, Hilldorfer, the son of a Pittsburgh cop with a blue-collar work ethic, was touched by Scott's suffering and outraged at Elias's callous disregard for his employees' well-being. Hilldorfer and his partner, Special Agent Bob Wojnicz, joined forces with seasoned Boise Assistant U.S. Attorney George Breitsameter and an indefatigable, brilliant young attorney from the Department of Justice's Environmental Crimes Section named David Uhlmann. Together they would uncover the horrifying truths and build the criminal case against Elias. A former New York whiz kid and Arizona real estate and business mogul, Elias owned businesses that had polluted Idaho with hazardous waste for nearly a decade. Yet Elias never spent a single day in jail, openly boasted of beating the environmental quality regulations, and avoided any significant fines. Would this case be any different? Hilldorfer, Uhlmann, and the government trial team embarked on an epic courtroom battle that would stretch them to the limits. What began as a struggle for justice for one young man became a fight by the EPA for its very ability to enforce the nation's environmental laws and to bring environmental polluters to justice. In the balance was whether Allan Elias would ever spend a day in jail. Gripping, powerful, and compulsively readable, "The Cyanide Canary" is a major achievement in the classic tradition of "A Civil Action," a book that unfolds like fiction yet is alarmingly true.

From Publishers Weekly The title refers to the cyanide in a tank that left Scott Dominguez, a worker at an Idaho plant, brain-damaged after an accident in 1996. As in a good thriller, the accident takes place in the first few pages, and the rest of the book is devoted to the legal case that followed. Dugoni, a freelance writer, and Hilldorfer, one of the Environmental Protection Agency investigators in the case, leave no doubt about who the bad guy is in this story: he's the plant's owner, Allan Elias, who had a long history of skirting the law in environmental matters. Using the memories of Hilldorfer and others involved in prosecuting the case, the authors build their story. They drive the narrative well in the book's first half (they're particularly strong in portraying the personalities of both the investigators and the witnesses in the case), but the story loses momentum when the case comes to the courtroom. The trial is depicted blow-by-blow, and, until the verdict is given, some of the outrage of the earlier pages is lost amid the minutiae of the legal system. Still, this book successfully fleshes out the excitement and the difficulty of prosecuting environmental criminals in the U.S. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist *Starred * At the core of this enthralling legal drama is a 250-gallon storage tank containing cyanide. On August 26, 1996, a 20-year-old worker at a fertilizer plant in Soda Springs, Idaho, was ordered to clean the tank, which he and other workers believed contained only dirt and water. The worker, who was told he needed no safety equipment for the job, was overcome by fumes and emerged severely brain damaged. Hilldorfer, an environmental-crime specialist for the EPA, and writer Dugoni retrace the EPA's effort to uncover what led to the accident and to bring the responsible parties to justice. Before Hilldorfer's campaign, environmental crimes were largely ignored or, when brought to trial, resulted

only in pro-forma wrist slaps. This account engages the reader, evoking both outrage over worker safety and suspense over the outcome of the trial. The authors combine accounts of Hildorfer's own experiences (he appears as a character in the book) with interviews, sworn trial testimony, court transcripts, and newspaper articles to tell a fully rounded, gripping story of how environmental crime is prosecuted in the real world. The title of the book is especially apt: it refers both to the old miners' practice of bringing canaries into mines as early warning systems of poisonous gases and to the fate of the brain-damaged worker, whose plight may yet save others. Connie Fletcher

Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved Ann Rule, author of "Green River, Running Red" and "Heart Full of Lies" An engrossing true account of a horrific crime that affects every one of us, this book is as compelling as any brilliantly written murder mystery. You will pull for the "good guys" and be stunned by the conscienceless avarice of "the poisoner." This is a roller-coaster ride of a book where you won't know if the ending will be just or a travesty of fat cats who despoil and move on, leaving permanently damaged victims behind. Powerful and heartbreaking, it is a must-read for every American who cares about our environment, and especially for those who won't smell a deadly waft of bitter almonds until it is far too late.