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Coal River

Michael Shnayerson

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One of America's most dramatic environmental battles is unfolding in southern West Virginia. Coal companies are blasting the mountains, decapitating them for coal. The forested ridge tops and valley streams of Appalachia—one of the country's natural treasures—are being destroyed, along with towns and communities. An entire culture is disappearing, and to this day, most Americans have no idea it's happening.

Michael Shnayerson first traveled to the coal fields four years ago, on assignment for *Vanity Fair*. There he met an inspiring young lawyer named Joe Lovett, who was fighting mountaintop removal in court with a series of brilliant and daring lawsuits. He also met Judy Bonds, whose grassroots group, the Coal River Mountain Watch, was speaking out in a region where talking truth to power was both brave and dangerous. The two had joined forces to take on Massey Energy, the largest and most aggressive of the coal companies, and its swaggering, notorious chairman, Don Blankenship.

Coal River is Shnayerson's account of this dramatic struggle. From courtroom to boardroom, forest clearing to factory floor, Shnayerson gives us a novelistic and compelling portrait of the people who risked their reputations and livelihoods in the fight against King Coal.

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