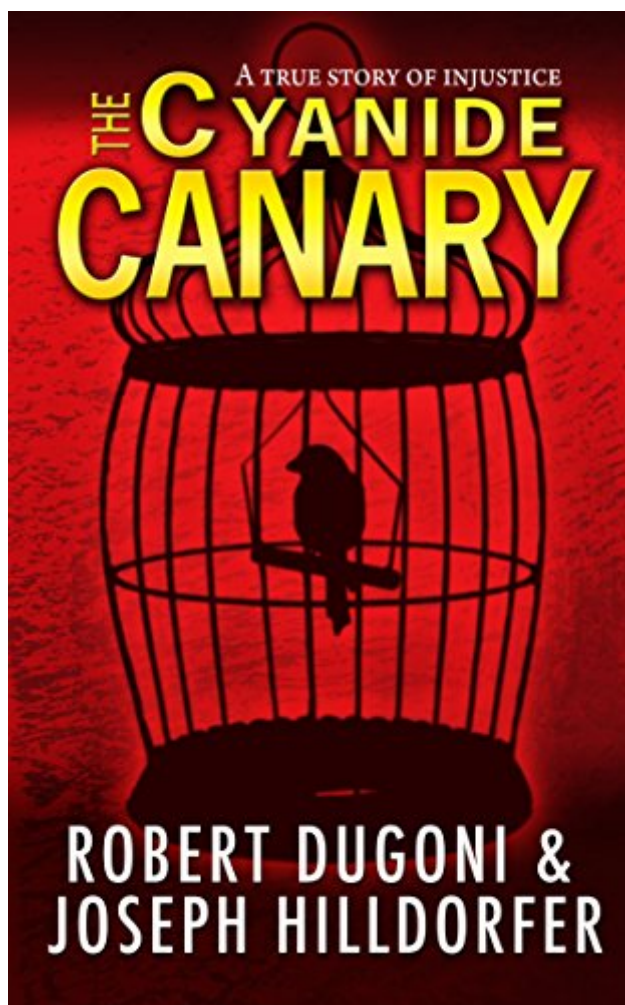


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# The Cyanide Canary: A True Story Of Injustice



## Synopsis

From Robert Dugoni, the #1 Kindle -bestselling author of MY SISTER'S GRAVE, and Environmental Protection Agency Special Agent Joseph Hilldorfer comes a true story of good and evil, greed and its consequences, and an elusive quest for justice. Early in the morning on August 27, 1996, twenty year old Scott Dominguez showed up for an ordinary day at the fertilizing plant where he worked. By 11:00am, he was clinging to life, unconscious and suffocating from toxic exposure to cyanide in a tank that was supposed to contain only mud and water. EPA Special Agent Joseph Hilldorfer was tasked with finding out what really happened on that horrific day in Soda Springs, Idaho, but the answers would not be easily uncovered. For more than four years Hilldorfer, his partner Bob Wojnicz, and a force of top-ranking U.S. attorneys struggled to expose the disturbing truths behind the tragedy, but would their efforts be enough to put the man responsible, Allan Elias, behind bars? Dugoni, a New York Times bestselling author known for his heart-pounding legal thrillers, and Hilldorfer, the agent who lived and breathed the Dominguez case, pen a compulsively readable work that is every bit as enthralling as fiction, yet is alarmingly true. \*\*\*A Washington Post Best Book of the Year selection\*\*\* "The Cyanide Canary is a marvelously suspenseful tale...a bona fide thriller pitting joyous, decent good guys against a villain without a scintilla of redeeming social value. Who wins in this robust scenario? Read the book and find out. The Washington Post "...As compelling as any brilliantly written murder mystery... A roller-coaster ride of a book. New York Times bestselling author, Ann Rule "...An important book for anyone concerned about the world around them. Former EPA Administrator, Christie Todd Whitman Kirkus STARRED Review: "...An electrically charged narrative... A top-notch nonfiction legal thriller. Booklist STARRED Review: "An enthralling legal drama. This account engages the reader, evoking both outrage over worker safety and suspense over the outcome of the trial. The authors...tell a fully rounded, gripping story of how environmental crime is prosecuted in the real world."

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Nothing can positively describe the essence of this story. The outright betrayal of humanity and the complete disregard for our environment by one man is tragic enough; adding the ineffectual legal system and the attitudes toward white-collar crime lays the extremely sad foundation for high-cost trials resulting in low-interest penalties. It is appalling that politics and greed control most of our businesses. I applaud this book. It is highly readable and easy to follow. Great for any lay person to gain understanding of the EPA's role and its general evolution. Thanks to the writers for having their concern and ability to compile this worthy tale.

Fantastic story that I could not put down. Told quite objectively and very well documented, it somehow managed to fill its pages with emotional content as well, making one feel that you were there....in the courtroom, in Scott's family home, and in the field. An amazing cast of folks from all walks of life are kept well sorted and described until you feel you know them (i.e. Stay with it thru the first few chapters). Twists and turns throughout. But most of all, this legal thriller provides deep insight into the history of a key case that illustrates the challenges faced by the US government agencies and courts that cope with one of the most difficult issues of our time: environmental crimes.

In writing this gripping documentary of a landmark case in the history of the EPA, the authors have done a service that, in my opinion, is comparable to the original event. It should be read by every thinking American, whether they support environmental regulation or not. Constructing this narrative

was in itself a monumental task. And it puts in stark relief the difficulties faced by those who would try to protect our citizens from even the worst environmental criminals. It is also a highly compelling story. I couldn't put it down.

The Cyanide Canary is a tough, non-fiction account of actual industrial practices and why we need the EPA. It is reported in an interesting way, however. Although there are times it is hard to read, there are many more times the reader is deeply into what is going on, thanks to the writing of Bob Dugoni. When a young man is severely damaged by cyanide gas in his work environment, the EPA agents become actively involved in discovering who made what decisions and why they tried to cover it up. When the case carries sufficient weight to lay charges and take the owner to court, they still have a tough fight with defense attorneys who specialize in that kind of work, undermining witnesses for the prosecution, even those who were nearly killed on the job. Joseph Hilldorfer worked with the EPA from beginning to end of this long but vitally important case, co-authoring The Cyanide Canary. The course of this case runs years, and I wouldn't have missed this story for anything because now I know the importance of monitoring industry from what actually HAS happened to real people. It isn't just theory or opinion. Reading this book should be required in several university courses, starting with those about the environment, some about big industry where bucks count more than human lives, etc.

Good story line based on an actual criminal environmental case investigated by a Special Agent of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

The 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.

I hesitate to say I love this book because it is (a) such a searing story of greed and corporate neglect; and (b) because I grew up in the area and know the people, though I moved away decades ago. Be warned, though, some of the characters will make you angry, and you'll wonder how a close-knit community could have allowed this kind of thing to exist and/or persist.

This was different and a little hard to follow at points but definitely worth reading.

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