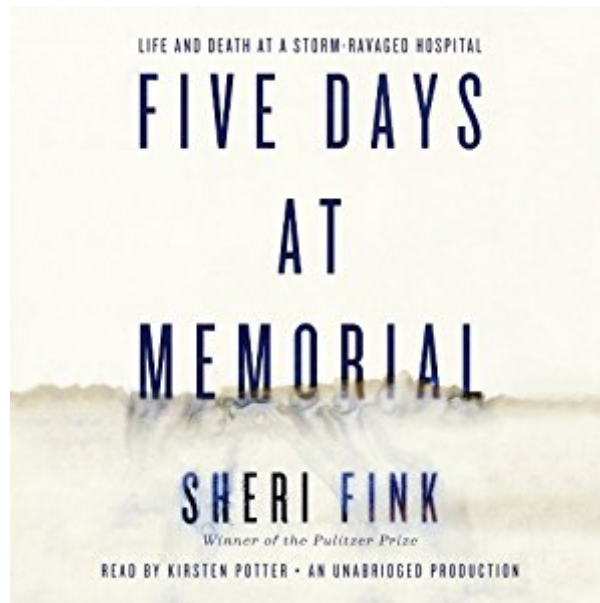




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Five Days At Memorial: Life And Death In A Storm-Ravaged Hospital



Synopsis

Pulitzer Prize winner Sheri Fink's landmark investigation of patient deaths at a New Orleans hospital ravaged by Hurricane Katrina - and her suspenseful portrayal of the quest for truth and justice In the tradition of the best writing on medicine, physician and reporter Sheri Fink reconstructs five days at Memorial Medical Center and draws the listener into the lives of those who struggled mightily to survive and to maintain life amidst chaos. After Katrina struck and the floodwaters rose, the power failed, and the heat climbed, exhausted caregivers chose to designate certain patients last for rescue. Months later, several health professionals faced criminal allegations that they deliberately injected numerous patients with drugs to hasten their deaths. Five Days at Memorial, the culmination of six years of reporting, unspools the mystery of what happened in those days, bringing the listener into a hospital fighting for its life and into a conversation about the most terrifying form of health care rationing. In a voice at once involving and fair, masterful and intimate, Fink exposes the hidden dilemmas of end-of-life care and reveals just how ill-prepared we are in America for the impact of large-scale disasters - and how we can do better. A remarkable book, engrossing from start to finish, Five Days at Memorial radically transforms your understanding of human nature in crisis.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fascinating book that looks at the situation from all angles and is proof positive that communication is essential in a disaster. There were many lessons in this story which was well written. One thing that became abundantly clear is that people who get to the top levels of any organization do not

always get there because they are the most qualified person. The one talent that they all seem to possess is the ability to point their finger at someone else and blame them for any mistakes that were made. They also have very short memories for certain events or certain things that they said. When making decisions in a chaotic disaster situation, it would be helpful to have at least a minimal understanding of the job that the people you are directing do. Not just their name and title but what they actually do and the environment that they do it in.

I love the book, yes it was long but the story is fascinating. I heard about some of the controversy going on in hospital during Katrina but did not know the whole story. My takeaway is that preparation is the utmost in any disaster but as the book stated hospital, towns and cities knew what they had to do, reports, TV shows and analysis were done about hurricanes and how to prepare for them to save lives and avoid tragedies. But one thing got in the way, MONEY. The hospital couldn't afford generator above grounds, it was too expensive, Levies needed to be fix to handle a major hurricanes, politics and money again, and I would not be surprise if another Katrina comes(God Forbid) and we hear again, a hospital not prepare for a major hurricanes for that fact, New Orleans not prepare.As for me, I look at disaster preparedness differently, I spoke to my employer about our plan, I got my emergency bag in my car, with extra clothes, flashlights, knives, etc- in case I will spend a few day at work and no help is available for 72 hours, I live in Southern California and our poison is earthquakes. And it wouldn't hurt for any employer to contract with a private ambulance to call and contact for your critical care people at your work, your local paramedics will be busy.

Although very hard to read, because of the matter at hand, it's an incredible journalistic account of what happened in these 5 days and the months following. The author has done an incredible job not to throw judgement at the people that's interviewed and part of the story. It's truly an amazing work. I would definitely recommend it to readers who want to get a much closer look into what a crisis can look and feel like beyond what the media reports in the heat of the moment, too often very biased and simply unethical. Again the first half can be tough to read, but the second one goes by really fast. Extremely well written.

This book is haunting and unforgettable. Who can say how people will act under the horrific circumstances of Hurricane Katrina, when the medical staff at Memorial has to decide who lives and who dies, based on the limited resources following a natural disaster. It's hard to imagine the nightmare the patients, doctors, and nurses experience and the tests to which they will be

subjected.

This is an extensively researched work of non-fiction. However, it gives the reader a real sense of the human experience involved in the tragic episode with complex portraits of the people involved in the situation and its aftermath. It also deals with issues around euthanasia and end of life in considerable detail and with profound thoughtfulness. It was refreshing to have a book that I wanted to return to and finish.

As a retired registered nurse with well over a decade experience in acute care nursing in Oncology, Critical Care, and Emergency medicine, I was sympathetic to the conditions the staff of Memorial Hospital worked under, yet horrified by many of the decisions that were made and the allegations of mercy killing by doctors and nurses. As a writer, I was impressed by Fink's investigative reporting and her ability to bring the scene to life, with all the underlying themes. Every literate American should read this book and discuss it -- especially hospital administrators, nurses, pharmacists, and physicians.

I've just finished reading this extraordinary book, and upon looking for more information about what has happened to Dr. Anna Pou since publication, I came across the controversy about the book's accuracy. I can say that as I read, it never occurred to me that author Sheri Fink was biased against Dr. Pou. When I finished reading the book, I was unable to decide if euthanasia had taken place or not. Her balanced narrative reminds me of the story of the blind man and the elephant. It seems to me that Sheri Fink made an enormous effort to tell every character's story without pushing any point of view other than how critical it is for hospitals to have workable disaster plans. In any case, I recommend the book enthusiastically, and I urge readers to keep an open mind as they follow the complicated trail of events at Memorial Hospital.

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