



Dirty Water: One Man's Fight to Clean Up One of the World's Most Polluted Bays

Bill Sharpsteen

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Dirty Water is the riveting story of how Howard Bennett, a Los Angeles schoolteacher with a gift for outrageous rhetoric, fought pollution in Santa Monica Bay--and won. The story begins in 1985, when many scientists considered the bay to be one of the most polluted bodies of water in the world. The insecticide DDT covered portions of the sea floor. Los Angeles discharged partially treated sewage into its waters. Lifeguards came down with mysterious illnesses. And Howard Bennett happily swam in it every morning.

By accident, Bennett learned that Los Angeles had applied for a waiver from the Clean Water Act to continue discharging sewage into the bay. Incensed that he had been swimming in dirty water, Bennett organized oddball coalition to orchestrate stunts such as wrapping brown ribbon around LA's city hall and issuing Dirty Toilet Awards to chastise the city's administration. This is the fast-paced story of how this unusual cast of characters created an environmental movement in Los Angeles that continues to this day with the nationally recognized Heal the Bay. Character-driven, compelling, and uplifting, *Dirty Water* tells how even the most polluted water can be cleaned up-by ordinary people.

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