



DISASTERS AT SEA

In April 1912 the world was stunned by the loss of the Titanic, 1,500 perished on the biggest, safest, most expensive passenger liner ever built. Despite all the advances in design and construction, the sea remains a hostile environment in the 21st century and disaster struck again when the ferry Joola sank off the coast of Gambia in 2002 with the loss of over 1,800 lives.



DISASTERS IN THE AIR

Ever since Icarus flew too close to the sun and paid with his life man has defied gravity, and such defiance has a terrible cost. Millions cross the globe safely every day but unforgettable footage of the Turkish airlines flight that crashed in Paris in 1974 killing all 346 on board; the Tupolev 154 that fell from the sky in 2006 killing all 170 on board; and the deadliest aviation disaster of all when two 737s collided on the ground in Tenerife in 1977 killing 583 passengers; reminds us how close we are to disaster each time we fasten our seat belts.



CLIMATIC DISASTERS

From time immemorial man has sought to control nature, shamans summon the rain, the faithful pray for the harvest sun, all to no avail; nature bows to no man. Drought in China in 1928 killed over 3 million people. An ice storm in Canada in 1998 that caused over a \$1bn of damage was described as the worst natural disaster in Canadian history.



ROAD DISASTERS

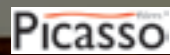
Every year over a million people die and almost 50 million are injured in traffic accidents; and the number continues to rise. Children and young people are the worst affected, with road traffic injuries now the single biggest source of fatality among 10- to 24-year-olds worldwide. In 2004, the last year for which comprehensive data is available, road traffic injuries killed more 5- to 14-year-olds than malaria, diarrhea and HIV and Aids.



DESPERATE HOURS

Disasters : We review the worst of the worst.

Produced by



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DESPERATE HOURS



WITNESSES & SURVIVORS

13x26 min.

HD TV Documentary Series

DEATH & DESTRUCTION - THE WORST OF MAN AND NATURE

A sudden calamitous event, causing great loss of life, damage, or hardship, like a flood, a tornado, an airplane crash, or an earthquake. This is not only a documentary but a live account of dramatic events in real time. In this unique 13-part series you'll be an eyewitness to some of the greatest disasters of the last 100 years and you will have a rare opportunity to compare Disasters across time and distance and decide which you think is the worst.

"This is not only a documentary but a live account of dramatic events in real time."

THE EPISODE INCLUDE :

- AUTHENTIC REPORTS OF EACH DISASTER AS IT HAPPENS
- WITNESSES
- SURVIVORS
- THE ORIGIN AND CAUSE OF EACH DISASTER
- GRAPHICS AND VISUAL EFFECTS ILLUSTRATE THE SCIENCE BEHIND THE EVENTS
- PREDICTIONS – DISASTERS WAITING TO HAPPEN



EPIDEMICS

As the world welcomed peace in 1918 and the end of the slaughter that killed 37 million people, Spanish Flu struck and the next 2 years saw twice as many dead. In 1956 despite vastly improved modern medicine Asian flu killed 2 million people worldwide. In 1976 a deadly new virus appeared in the Congo, killing 90% of those affected, there is no cure for the Ebola virus and countries surrounding the current outbreak in Guinea declared emergencies and closed their borders.



WIND

Cyclones, hurricanes, typhoons, these storms take many names but they all pose the same threat. Up to 600 miles wide, a huge vortex with a calm eye at its centre, and with wind speeds up to 200 mph, they start life over warm water and on reaching land; wreak enormous havoc on life and property. Female hurricanes cause more death and destruction than male hurricanes according to the results of a recent study. Researchers wonder if people relax their guard and take fewer precautions when it's a woman, leading to greater loss of life. We bring you unique footage from hurricane Katrina which in 2005 almost destroyed New Orleans; the 1970 cyclone in the Bay of Bengal that claimed 500,000 lives; the tornado that killed 1,300 in Bangladesh in 1989; and more.



EARTHQUAKE

The Earth's crust – "so solid beneath our feet, then you feel something moving, pounding deep down in the ground. The pounding gets stronger. Instinctively you know it is an earthquake and you stop everything you are doing and just stay still, concentrated, feeling the ground, hoping it stops pounding. It doesn't, it gets stronger.

You see objects moving around you, everything starts shaking. Now you feel panic; get out of the building or go under a table. The building is moving, you can hear the walls shrieking, you wonder if it will fall apart and bury you alive." These are the words of a survivor. This episode includes the devastating South East Asian tsunami in 2004 caused by a massive earthquake deep underwater that killed 150,000 people; the Tangshan earthquake that killed 250,000 in 1976; the Kashmir earthquake in 2005 that killed 100,000.



FIRE

Fire is one of the most destructive forces in nature. Fed by the oxygen in the air that surrounds us, fire can spread faster than a running man, burning everything in its path. London fires in 1896 were fought with buckets of water, but today even modern fire-fighting equipment struggles to deal with disasters like the firestorm that killed 173 people in South-Eastern Australia in 2009, or the firestorm that killed 100 people in a US nightclub in 2003. We also show you the Coconut Grove fire in Boston in 1942 that killed 492 people, and the Nigerian ammunition warehouse that caught fire and exploded in 2002 killing over 1,000 people.



FLOOD

1931 and the Huai river in China peaks at 53 feet above normal killing 200,000 in a single night as they sleep, in total as many as 4 million die in this disaster. 1999 and the state of Vargas in Venezuela is brought to a standstill as torrential rains triggers a mudslide that buries towns under 3 meters of mud, sweeps whole communities into the sea, and kills an estimated 50,000 people. We also feature unique footage from the devastating North Sea flood of 1952 that swept across Great Britain and the Netherlands, and the Maharashtra flood in 2005 that paralysed Mumbai and killed over 5,000 people.



VOLCANO

Awesome manifestations of the fiery power locked deep within the Earth, Volcanoes are violent ruptures of the Earth's surface, expelling molten lava, rocks, ash and toxic gases into the atmosphere. These flows of molten lava can reach 2,000 degrees Fahrenheit (1,250 degrees Celsius) capable of burning whole towns in their path. Mud flows from rapidly melting snow can strip mountains and valleys bare and bury towns. Dramatic footage includes the violent 1985 eruption in Nevado del Ruiz, Colombia that killed 25,000 people; the Mount Pinatubo eruption in 1991, one of the largest eruptions of the 20th century that caused worldwide temperatures to drop as it ejected 10 billion tones into the atmosphere.



GEOLOGICAL DISASTERS

Every year millions of people experience the effects of geological disasters. New methods of predicting and preventing such events seem to be helping, but are nowhere near perfect. In 6 seconds an avalanche can reach 130 kilometers per hour; once the snow stops moving it freezes like cement, trapping victims; a mudslide or landslide is similar to an avalanche, a fast moving flow of mud, water, boulders, rocks, trees and even cars. Quicksand; gigantic sinkholes; volcanic lahars; we show you the dramatic results of nature at its most merciless.



NUCLEAR AND INDUSTRIAL DISASTERS

Countless lives have been lost down the ages in natural disasters but there is something uniquely terrifying when death and disaster strike from the hand of man. Over 8,000 people died and over 500,000 continue to suffer the effects of a gas leak in Bhopal, India, acknowledged as the worst ever industrial disaster. The Gulf of Mexico is still recovering from the BP oil spill. The terrifying power of the atom lights homes throughout the world as it simultaneously strikes fear into our hearts.