

## Hemingway's Hurricane: The Great Florida Keys Storm of 1935

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#### The all-but-forgotten story of an infamous tragedy that became the political scandal of its era

When the strongest hurricane of the 20th century slammed into the Florida Keys on Labor Day Weekend, 1935, it was as if its 200-mile-an-hour winds had conspired with politics, the Depression, and petty bureaucracy to turn disaster into tragedy. Among the 423 dead were 259 World War I veterans who had been sent by Roosevelt's New Deal to live in tent cities and build a highway across the keys.

Arriving from Key West in the aftermath to help rescue his fellow veterans, Ernest Hemingway was outraged to learn that they had been prevented from escaping the storm—first by government stinginess, then by the National Guard. His public censure of the government spurred an investigation that many called a whitewash. *Hemingway's Hurricane* tells an all-butforgotten tale of terror, heroism, incompetence, and compassion in the face of the overwhelming power of nature.

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