



Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank

By Lisa Margonelli

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Oil on the Brain is a smart, surprisingly funny account of the oil industry—the people, economies, and pipelines that bring us petroleum, brilliantly illuminating a world we encounter every day.

Americans buy ten thousand gallons of gasoline a second, without giving it much of a thought. Where does all this gas come from? Lisa Margonelli's desire to learn took her on a one-hundred thousand mile journey from her local gas station to oil fields half a world away. In search of the truth behind the myths, she wriggled her way into some of the most off-limits places on earth: the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the New York Mercantile Exchange's crude oil market, oil fields from Venezuela, to Texas, to Chad, and even an Iranian oil platform where the United States fought a forgotten one-day battle.

In a story by turns surreal and alarming, Margonelli meets lonely workers on a Texas drilling rig, an oil analyst who almost gave birth on the NYMEX trading floor, Chadian villagers who are said to wander the oil fields in the guise of lions, a Nigerian warlord who changed the world price of oil with a single cell phone call, and Shanghai bureaucrats who dream of creating a new Detroit.

Deftly piecing together the mammoth economy of oil, Margonelli finds a series of stark warning signs for American drivers.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In the last few years, just about everyone has had "oil on the brain" at some point, as record gas prices and a disastrous war have called our dependency into question. But though the U.S. burns 10,000 gallons of gasoline a second, few of us know how oil is created and drilled, how gas stations compete or what actually goes on in a refinery—let alone what happens in the mysterious Strategic Petroleum Reserve, where the U.S. government stores roughly 700 million barrels of oil in underground salt caverns on the Gulf Coast of Texas. Margonelli answers these questions and more, before examining some of the key patches in the oil industry's geopolitical quilt: source countries like Chad, where promises of real local growth fall hopelessly short, or China, which, "by 2025, perhaps, will import as much crude oil as the U.S. does now." Writing in a witty, first-person voice, Margonelli criticizes corruption in places like Nigeria, while expressing her "love of hydrocarbons" for the unlikeliness of their formation and the ingenuity required to extricate them. This is an original, open-minded look at a subject about which everyone has an opinion. (*Feb. 6*)

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From [Booklist](#)

Margonelli has written about the culture and economy of energy for publications such as *Wired*, *Discover*, *Salon*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*. In the summer of 2003, she started hanging out at independent gas stations, where owners might clear pennies per gallon of gas, surviving on impulse sales of junk food and soda. Her journey takes us up the delivery chain, spending a typical day with a tanker truck driver, hanging out with suppliers, touring refineries, and seeing what life is like at an oil rig. Whether visiting "wildcatters" in Texas, the Strategic Petroleum Reserve in the Gulf of Mexico, or the oil pit at the New York Mercantile Exchange, Margonelli charms her way into the good graces of insiders to report on the vast petroleum network. Her voyage takes us to Venezuela, Chad, Nigeria, and ultimately the Persian Gulf, where she spends time at the Salmon oil fields in Iran. Filled with rich history, industry anecdotes, and politics, Margonelli's book brings a deeper appreciation of the complicated and often tenuous process that we take for granted. *David Siegfried*

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Review

"If you drive a car, you must read this book." —Mary Roach, author of *Stiff*

"By giving voice to the people who are the links in the global oil chain, Margonelli invites us to leapfrog all the rhetoric, dry statistics, and dire pronouncements about oil in order to truly understand it." —*Fast Company*

"Hugely enjoyable, compulsively readable, and brilliantly reported." —Po Bronson, author of *What Should I Do with My Life?*

"From the corner gas station to the oil fields of Nigeria, there couldn't be a better traveling companion than Margonelli. She's fast, fearless, funny, and a brilliant observer."

—Barbara Ehrenreich, author of *Nickel and Dimed*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

David Carter:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite e-book and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your trouble; you can add your knowledge by the guide entitled Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank. Try to make the book Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank as your buddy. It means that it can be your friend when you really feel alone and beside those of course make you smarter than previously. Yeah, it is very fortunate for you personally. The book makes you more confidence because you can know every thing by the book. So , let's make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Lori Gravitt:

This book untitled Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank to be one of several books in which best seller in this year, that's because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit on it. You will easily to buy that book in the book retail outlet or you can order it through online. The publisher in this book sells the e-book too. It makes you quickly to read this book, since you can read this book in your Touch screen phone. So there is no reason to you to past this reserve from your list.

Kenny Crowther:

People live in this new day of lifestyle always make an effort to and must have the time or they will get wide range of stress from both daily life and work. So , once we ask do people have time, we will say absolutely without a doubt. People is human not a robot. Then we request again, what kind of activity do you possess when the spare time coming to an individual of course your answer can unlimited right. Then do you try this one, reading books. It can be your alternative in spending your spare time, the book you have read is Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank.

Vivian Regan:

Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank can be one of your beginning books that are good idea. We recommend that straight away because this publication has good vocabulary that can increase your knowledge in language, easy to understand, bit entertaining but delivering the information. The article writer giving his/her effort that will put every word into joy arrangement in writing Oil on the Brain: Petroleum's Long, Strange Trip to Your Tank nevertheless doesn't forget the main position, giving the reader the hottest and also based confirm resource information that maybe you can be one of it. This great information can drawn you into new stage of crucial contemplating.

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