# UTAH HEALTHCARE PREPAREDNESS SUMMIT

## The Human Side of Disaster

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DRC DISASTER RESEARCH CENTER SERIES

# DISASTER IN AISLE 13

A CASE STUDY OF THE COLISEUM EXPLOSION AT THE INDIANA STATE FAIRGROUNDS, OCTOBER 31, 1963

THOMAS E. DRABEK

COLLEGE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE • THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

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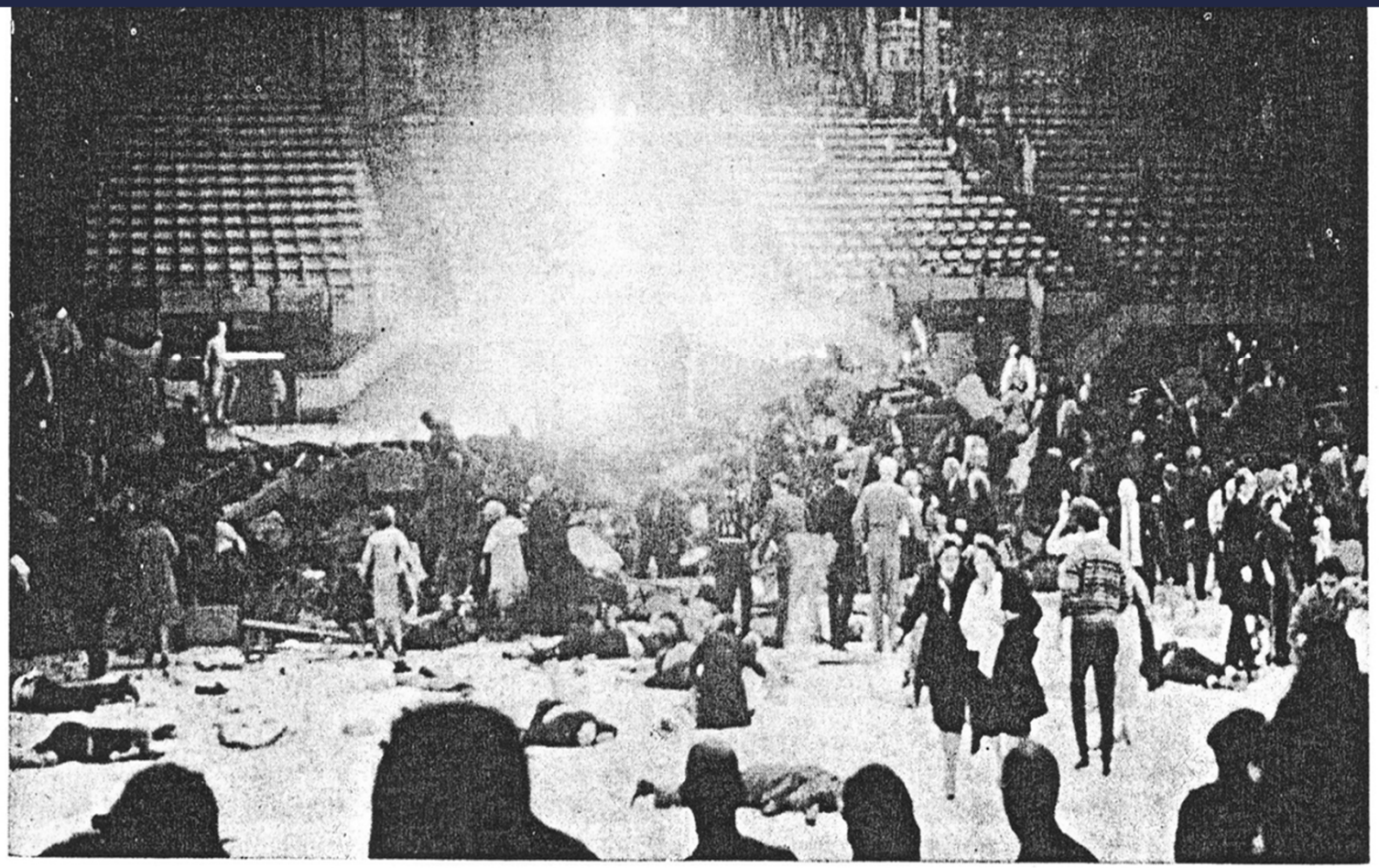


PLATE I—MINUTES AFTER THE EXPLOSION. Mr. Carl Defenderfer left the Coliseum with the crowd, then remembered the camera around his neck. Upon returning inside, he obtained this picture which was published in *Life,* November 15, 1963, and is the only picture taken showing the fire.

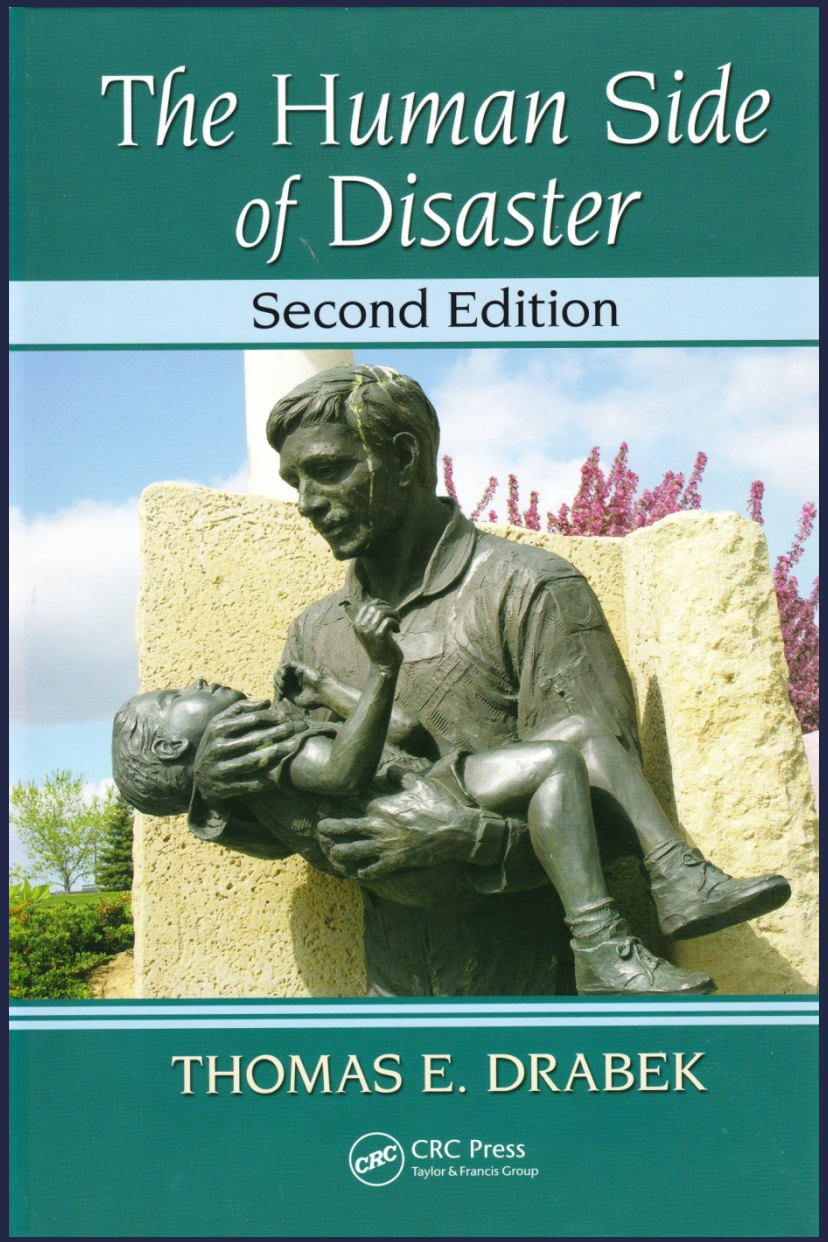
PLATE II—BLAST AREA. Note the size of concrete rubble and the LP gas tank in the lower right hand corner of the picture. Courtesy of *The Indianapolis Times.*

# KEY LESSONS: 1963

- No panic flight
- Active responses by survivors
- Convergence at Coliseum
- Event qualities reduced challenges (location + time of day
- Agency notification: delayed then rapid mobilization

# KEY LESSONS: 1963

- Limited inter-agency communication
- Uneven victim arrivals at hospitals
- Emergent communication systems (telephone bank and inter-hospital)
- Disaster plans: incomplete and unrehearsed
- One year later: still waiting
- Three decades later: reform and professionalism


The Human Side of Disaster
Second Edition
THOMAS E. DRABEK
CRC Press
Taylor & Francis Group

# WARNING AND EVACUATION BEHAVIOR

1. Disbelief, Not Panic
2. Confirmation Efforts
3. Invitational Process
4. Group Process
5. Receiver Characteristics
6. Message Characteristics
7. Relatives & Friends, Not Shelters
8. Pets
9. Return Without Delay

# INITIAL RESPONSES: SURVIVORS AND VOLUNTEERS

1. Active, Not Passive
2. Heroic Behavior
3. Unofficial Volunteer
4. Convergence
5. News Media
6. Social Media Networks

# ORGANIZED - DISORGANIZATION

1. Agency Autonomy
2. Inter-Agency Communication
3. Communication Overload
4. Cooperation VS. Coordination
5. Control Through Multiple EOCs
6. PIO VS. “The Media”
7. Volunteers – Problem Source or Resource

# RECOVERY: SHORT AND LONG TERM

1. The Bitch Phase
2. Looting Fears
3. Bad Dreams
4. Seeking Closure
5. Short-Term Oscillations
6. Lingering Stress Effects
7. Kin Relations
8. Community Participation
9. A Sense of Perspective

# WHAT HAS CHANGED?

From Disaster to Catastrophe

1. Frequency
2. Cost (Andrew, Katrina, Sandy)
3. Scope (Midwest floods)
4. Complexity (oil spill, Japan earthquake, tsunami, nuclear meltdown)
5. Conflict (Boston Marathon Bombing, terrorism
6. Massacres (Columbine, Tucson, Aurora, Sandy Hook)

# Earthquake 8.9

MARCH 21, 2011 THEDAILYBEAST.COM

# Newsweek

**The Scary Tsunamis Yet to Come**
by Simon Winchester

And:
Shocking Photos of a Disaster

# WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Creation of FEMA

1. Recognition of Disaster Life Cycle
2. Partial Implementation of CEM
3. Multi-Hazard Approach
4. Clarification of Intergovernmental Partnerships
5. Higher Education Project
6. Homeland Security Interface (post 9/11)

# WHAT HAS CHANGED?

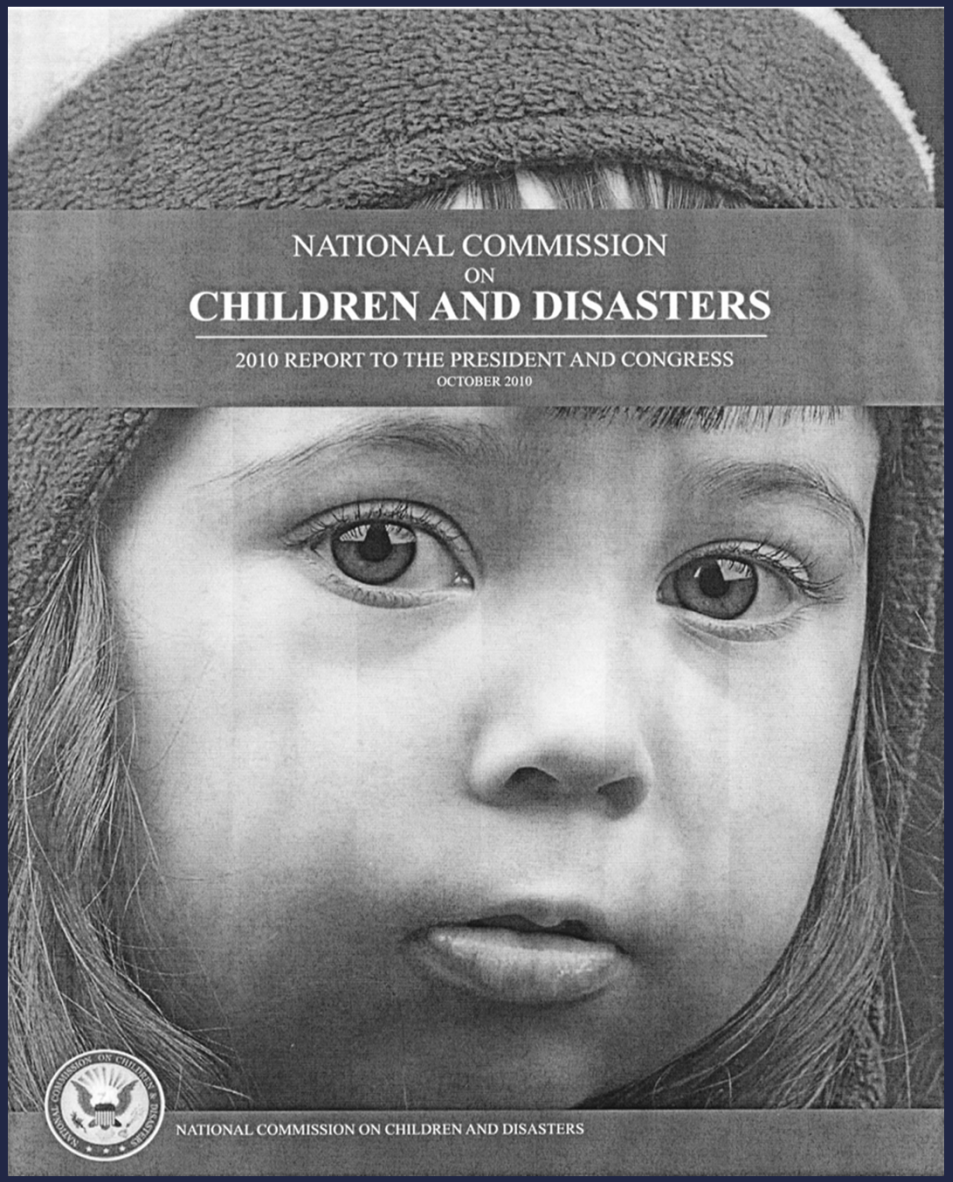
Professionalization of Emergency Management

1. Evolution of IAEM
2. College and University Programs
3. Internationalization (IAEM; multi-national responses)
4. Technology Applications
   (From microcomputer to smart phone)
   (Emergent social media)

# WHAT HAS CHANGED?

Increased Awareness of Vulnerable Populations

1. Elderly
2. Children
3. Women
4. Ethnic Minorities
5. The Poor
6. Pets


NATIONAL COMMISSION
ON
CHILDREN AND DISASTERS
2010 REPORT TO THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS
OCTOBER 2010
NATIONAL COMMISSION ON CHILDREN AND DISASTERS

# FUTURE CHALLENGES

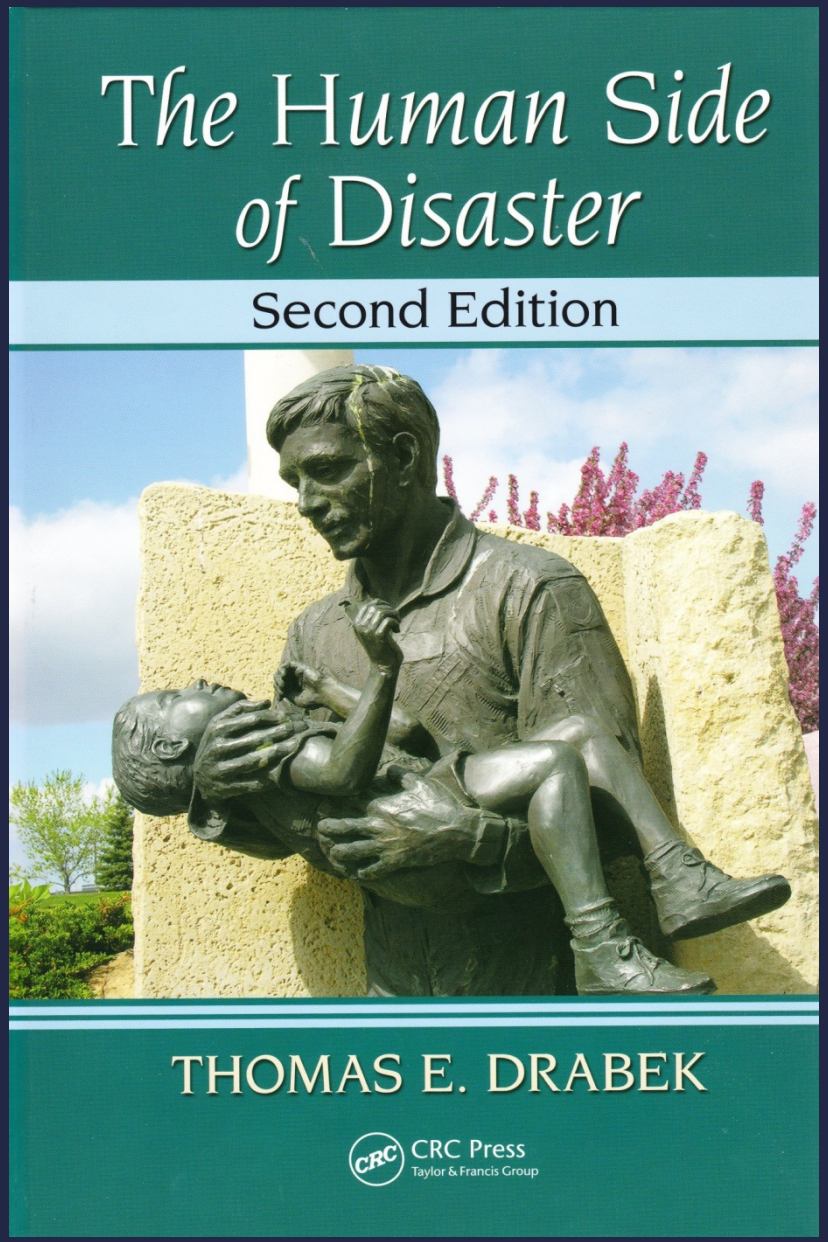
A. More Disasters: Routine and Catastrophic
    1. Environmental (climate change)
    2. Technological (aging infrastructure, accidents)
    3. Conflict (terrorism, revolution)

# FUTURE CHALLENGES (cont'd)

A. Intergovernmental System Role Shifts
    1. Role Shifts among Federal
    2. Increase by Military
    3. State and Local Expansion
B. Nurturing a Culture of Preparedness
C. Expanded Citizen Participation

# NEVER AGAIN

1. Reducing Vulnerabilities (Klinenberg)
2. Spreading the Risk
3. Creating Cultures of Preparedness (Mileti)
4. Strategies for Coordination
5. Local EM:  Community Change Agents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