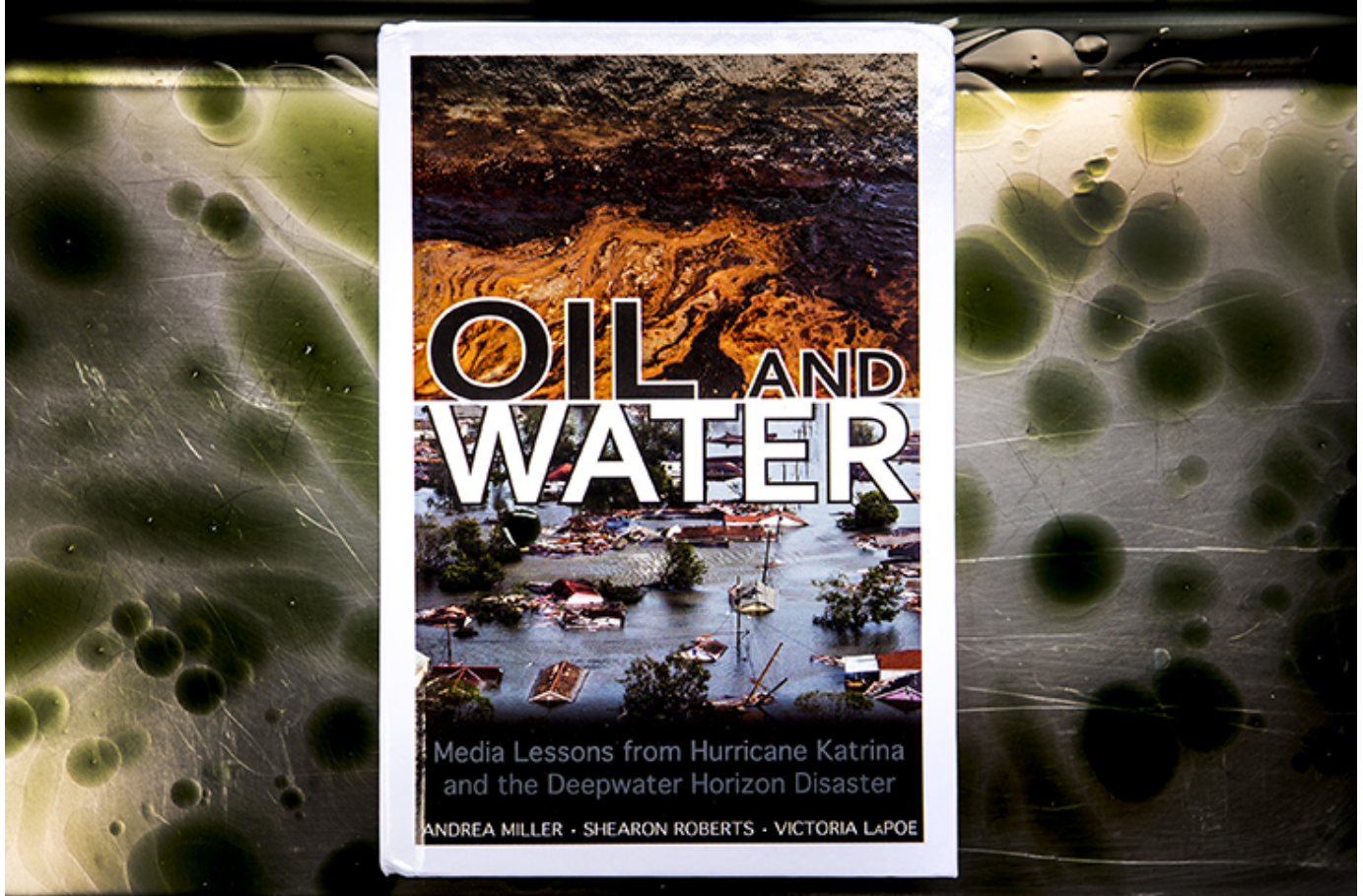


## Double whammy: Katrina and the BP oil spill

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*Oil and Water: Media Lessons From Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Disaster* analyzes the journalism amid the crises of two catastrophes that have dramatically changed lives in the Gulf Coast region. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

In [\*Oil and Water: Media Lessons From Hurricane Katrina and the Deepwater Horizon Disaster\*](#) (University Press of Mississippi, 2014), Shearon Roberts and her co-authors Andrea Miller and Victoria LaPoe “go behind the scenes and capture the world of these two crises from the point of view of the tenets of journalism, and the experiences of the journalists who were thrust into these disasters, both as professionals and victims.”

Roberts earned her PhD in Latin American studies from Tulane University in May 2014. But during the weekend that Katrina hit in August 2005, after she'd completed an internship at *The Times-Picayune*, she was starting as a weekend general assignment reporter at the newspaper while beginning work on her master's degree in mass communication at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

Immediately after the storm, Roberts began conducting interviews of journalists covering Katrina. These interviews are an integral part of *Oil and Water*.

"These journalists got up and went to cover the disaster and saw it every day. Then they went home, where they stayed in a trailer in front of their flooded house," says Roberts.

Mental breakdowns, job insecurity, substance abuse and suicide attempts of local journalists are chronicled in *Oil and Water*.

"It was a depressing time for people who care deeply about what they're doing," says Roberts.

For so many people, there is no going home. There is always a pre-Katrina and post-Katrina reference for anybody in this area.

In spite of the many obstacles, though, local journalists beautifully captured the sense of a place being wiped out, says Roberts.

"This book is to elevate and to lift up the local media at a time when media is becoming globalized, regionalized, nationalized and digitized," she says.

And it should not be overlooked: "The story is still being written."

&#x201c;The story is still being written.&#x201d; -- Shearon Roberts