

A SHATTERED PARADISE

THE GREAT QUAKE

"A total disaster that may occur in our time, and YOU are there!"

WARREN SMITH





Paleo-geological discoveries bear evidence of great earth movements unknown in recorded history. However, in these stories a catastrophic earthquake destroys all infrastructures in the southwest corner of the United States and the northwest corner of Mexico in the near future. This is an anthology of fictional short stories, with some cross characterization, all connected to a common time and event. These tales are the result of a very vivid dream of an elderly author.

A Shattered Paradise

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/7456.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**

Your free excerpt appears below. Enjoy!

A SHATTERED PARADISE

The Great Quake

A total disaster that may occur
in our time, and YOU are there!

Warren Smith

Copyright © 2014 Warren Smith

ISBN 978-1-63263-140-4

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., Bradenton, Florida.

Printed in the United States of America.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

Booklocker.com, Inc.
2014

First Edition

Chapter One

The Disaster Begins

Camp David, Maryland, September 1, 2016, 4:19 p.m. EDT

A very excited John Evans, the chief of staff to the president of the United States, burst into the president's office at 4:19 p.m., interrupting the president's audience with a high-profile foreign UN ambassador.

"Mr. President, we just had a cataclysmic disaster on the west coast. Just about the whole coast of southern California has been washed into the sea."

The president scowled and a look of disbelief flashed across his face. "What?"

The chief of staff was a middle-aged, short, heavy-set, balding east Texan. His face was beet red and his hand trembled as he excitedly extended a computer printout.

"There was an earthquake in southern California with a magnitude very near ten. The resulting tidal waves have just about scoured the coastal cities off the map almost all the way up to San Francisco. Hawaii and parts of Alaska are on alert, and they expect the worst. Furthermore, a lot of dams have failed, drowning thousands. The only communications are satellite phones and some Ham radios. There is no electric power in that whole end of the country, including most of western Arizona and parts of Nevada."

The president went pale. "What's being done to help those folks?"

"FEMA is just getting organized with the Joint Chiefs of Staff at the Pentagon and alerting the American Red Cross to stand by to activate their resources, including the International Red Cross. The Air Force is mobilizing their reconnaissance resources to get the quickest look possible. As soon as we make contact with the governor of California we'll try to coordinate with his Office of Emergency Services. The irony of all this is that September is National Disaster Preparedness month."

The president asked the visiting ambassador to excuse him, and the state department escort ushered him away. The president looked at the computer printout:

PRELIMINARY EARTHQUAKE REPORT –

CALIFORNIA INTEGRATED SEISMIC NET – USGS/UC, BERKELEY, CA THIS IS A COMPUTER-GENERATED MESSAGE. THE UC SEISMOLOGICAL TEAM HAS REVIEWED THIS EVENT. A GREAT EARTHQUAKE OCCURRED AT 1315:02 (PDT) ON SATURDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2016. THE MAGNITUDE 9.8 + EVENT OCCURRED AT 19 KM (11.8 MILES) ESE OF ANZA, CA. THE HYPO CENTRAL DEPTH IS 17 KM (10.6 MILES). DURATION WAS 8 MIN. 45 SEC. THIS EVENT IS EXPECTED TO GENERATE TSUNAMIS.

At 4:30 p.m. EDT a second report came from the U.S. Coast Guard Station San Francisco (SFO), and John delivered it to the president:

TSUNAMI REPORT

SEVERE TSUNAMI ACTIVITY HAS FOLLOWED THE GREAT QUAKE REPORTED AT 1315:02 PDT. THIS ACTIVITY HAS HAD PROFOUND EFFECTS ALONG THE PACIFIC COAST FROM ALASKA SOUTH INTO THE BAJA STATE OF MEXICO AND ACROSS THE PACIFIC TO HAWAII AND POINTS WEST.

At 7:35 p.m. EDT John delivered a third report from USGS/UC Berkeley to the president:

CALIFORNIA INTEGRATED SEISMIC NET – USGS/UC, BERKELEY, CA THIS IS A COMPUTER-GENERATED MESSAGE. A SEISMOLOGIST HAS NOT YET REVIEWED THIS EVENT.

A GREAT EARTHQUAKE OCCURRED AT 1330:23 P.M. (PDT) ON SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2016. THE MAGNITUDE 8.3 EVENT OCCURRED AT 4 KM (2.5 MILES) NW (315 DEG) OF WRIGHTWOOD, CA. THE HYPOCENTRAL DEPTH IS 19 KM

(14.5 MILES). THIS IS 36 KM (22.4 MILES) SE (135 DEG) FROM PALMDALE, 56 KM (35 MILES) ENE OF LOS ANGELES. DURATION WAS 3.4 MIN. THIS EVENT IS BEING CONSIDERED AS THE FIRST MAJOR AFTERSHOCK OF THE 1315 PDT EVENT. MORE TSUNAMI ACTIVITY IS EXPECTED.

Chapter Three

RETRO...Late August 2016

The Honorable Jay Trent of San Diego County and the Honorable Pepe Ortiz of neighboring Imperial County, state senators of California from opposite sides of the aisle, were having lunch in a popular bistro away from the capitol building in Sacramento. They were discussing the Colorado River water rights fight that had been going on in earnest between their districts for the past forty years.

Pepe complained– "How can the San Diego City and County Planning Commissions be so out of their minds for over sixty years to allow developers from all over the country to create an urban sprawl in a semi-arid zone that doesn't have enough water to support a population of seven hundred-fifty thousand, let alone the current four and a half million plus? And they're still building! The freeways and boulevards are a mess at all hours of the day and night. My district has had to cut back on agricultural production many times in the past twenty years, and now you want more? My God man, think! We used to be the produce capitol of the west all year 'round. Now we can barely feed ourselves and you want to take that away?"

Jay shook his head. "Pepe, that's all beyond my control. I've been a proponent of desalination on a mass scale using offshore nuclear reactors to produce more and better water than the whole Colorado River. But the environmental eco-terrorists file a lawsuit at every move. They won't even stand still for using the outflow from the gas-powered power plants, saying it will increase the ocean salinity and temperature and adversely affect the coastal fisheries. Even privately funded efforts have hit one stonewall after another. The point I was trying to make during this morning's session was actually to bring more federal action to bear in support of desalination. I also wanted to heat your side up to get this matter before the Feds and get us moving in the right direction. And it appears I've succeeded."

"Well, why didn't you come right out and say that?"

"If I did that, the ecology crowd would take off for Washington immediately to head us off. That's why I invited you here."

Pepe smiled— "Well, thank you. I think I'm beginning to see the big picture now. But I'll have to go to art school to draw that same picture for those dumbbells I work with. Besides, right now we're having to deal with a lot of nervous constituents over the earthquake swarms we've been having lately."

"But aren't those rather common in the Imperial Valley?"

Pepe shook his head— "I have some of my staff working on the specifics of those in the past, and so far these seem to be a whole number or two higher on the scale. Also, they're lasting about a hundred and fifty percent longer. In seismic numbers, that's a quantum leap, I'm told. People are complaining they have difficulty sleeping some nights. They're frightened, and they want some facts. It's worse than the aftershocks back in 2010 and 2013. Why they're asking my office is beyond me. They ought to be talking to the experts at Cal-Tech."

At this same time, Senator Trent's wife, Marsha, was at home in La Jolla, California entertaining her old college chum and next door neighbor, Elise O'Brien, and discussing the upcoming Labor Day weekend. They were having lunch out on Marsha's lanai, overlooking the Pacific Ocean some five hundred feet below and three-quarters of a mile away. Their view was directly over La Jolla shores.

Elise said, "You surely do have an envious body and appearance for your age. How do you do it?"

"You look pretty good yourself, dear. In fact if I thought I looked as sexy as you, I'd feel a lot more secure with my husband traveling back and forth to Sacramento. I'm envious of your pretty red hair."

Elise laughed. "You know it's a salon tint. Otherwise I'd be turning gray."

"Well, I don't care. I'm going to let mine turn white even if Jay thinks I should maintain my blonde color."

Elise took a sip of her martini. "Different subject... come Saturday on Labor Day weekend, we're planning to take our boat out off of Mission Beach near the wreck reef diving area and just anchor, party, swim and enjoy the sun without a crush of people all around. We'll

even spend a night or two if we want to. Would you guys like to come along?"

"Won't you be interfering with the dive boats over the wrecks?"

"Not to worry, we stay inshore of that area, but we're still protected from all the sport fishermen. Talk it over with Jay and get back to me?"

"All right, and maybe we can bring our son Josh and his fiancée?"

"No problem. Bring anyone you like. Henry's already lined up Fillipi, our caterer, so we won't have to do anything but have fun."

At the same time, San Diego's fire chief, Ferdie Wiley, and El Cajon's fire chief, Jack Smith, were having lunch and discussing the recent successful disaster drill and the very high grades they had earned from both of the state and federal agencies monitoring them.

Foreshock

Doctor Henry O'Brien was the staff expert on disaster triage at the UCSD Medical center in San Diego and the county director of Medical Disaster Preparedness. He took great pride in the good grades his organization of unified countywide hospital triage had gotten from the California Department of Emergency Services (CDES) and FEMA during the recent disaster drill.

At 2:25 p.m. he was showing the award to the hospital chief of staff. There was the sound of a muffled explosion, followed by a sudden tremor throughout the building. It lasted several seconds, rattling file cabinets and shifting loose gear in the tenth-floor room.

The chief looked a little startled, and smiling nervously— "I think you guys are carrying these preparedness drills a little too far."

"You know, that was the real thing! I don't think I've ever felt one that sharp and short, and I was raised here."— He went to his computer terminal and clicked on a tool bar that brought up a U.S. Geological Survey web site, and then clicked on Real Time Earthquake Maps— "That was a magnitude 5.2 in the Brawley Seismic Zone, somewhere just southwest of the Salton Sea. That's the first one that strong in that area in over two years. They're usually one, and two-point something

with an occasional three, and they last only a second or two. They've been having a large swarm of these lately, running double quantum, but they haven't attracted that much attention. The local TV stations might have something on this one at five o'clock."

"I'm sure glad I've got you on my staff. Now I know where to turn if anything stronger hits us."

"If a real strong one hits, you'd better get in here fast, because I'll be picking up my disaster kit and heading out of here to the County Emergency Operations Center."

People in the Palm Springs-Indio area were well rattled by the tremor. It caused the FAA control tower operators to close the fields, as they bailed out of the towers in fear of broken windows. The same thing happened in Yuma some sixty miles to the southeast. The people in the Anza Borrego Desert State Park some fifty miles to the west-northwest barely noticed it. In fact most of them missed it all together, because of their being on a large alluvial plain stretching from the San Ysidro Mountains just to their west, and the fact that they live on one of the most active seismic areas in North America.

As one local put it, "This joint is always jumping. If you're on your feet or moving around you don't notice 'em. Most of the time your only indicators are the pictures on the walls. You suddenly notice they're crooked."

About two hours later there was another that wasn't quite so sharp, but lasted about five seconds. Accordingly, fewer people felt it. As the day wore on, there were similar continuing tremors. That evening, major network news broadcasts all over southern California quoted their contacts with the seismology department at Cal-Tech in Pasadena as saying—

"The Brawley seismic zone is experiencing a small seismic swarm that is common to the area."

When asked whether the San Andreas Fault would become involved, the experts agreed—

"Since no major activity has occurred in that area in about two hundred and seventy-five years this swarm just seems to be some

settling along one of the Brawley faults. We don't expect the swarm to be the precursor of anything severe."

The Big Parades, September 1, 2016

As Saturday rolled around, there had been lots of preparations all over California and Arizona for statewide gay-pride festivals. Parades were to roll simultaneously in just about every city with a population over 100,000. The citizens had long ago mostly given up trying to downplay or mitigate what some considered sordid festivities. Instead they just treated it like the weather: it does pretty much what it wants to, and the courts have proven there is nothing anyone can do about it.

On this day, the actual weather was a continuation of another monsoon condition that had moved in from the Sea of Cortez to the south earlier in the week. Instead of being hot and dry as is the norm in the desert southwest, it had turned extremely hot and humid. The folks in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys were about done in, as the humidity heat factor was almost killing some unhealthy and older people. Birds were reported falling out of the air. This is an area where triple-digit temperatures of 115 to 122 are sometimes normal in July and August, but with very low humidity. After September first, usually there is a noticeable cool down. The parades were scheduled to begin at the same time as those in the rest of the state at 12:00 p.m. In the desert areas, many folks said it was too late in the day to even be out doors, let alone participating in a parade.

At 12:10 p.m. just as the parades started to roll, with the die-hard celebrants in their various outlandish drill teams, floats and formations, a seismic shock wave rolled across the Southland. It got everyone's attention. It was later described as an M 5.1 and it lasted over four seconds and tapered off. Forty minutes later, just as the larger parades were going strong, another shaker just like it rolled through again.

Those in El Centro who defied the warnings and paraded in the heat didn't last very long. At 105 degrees and 85 percent humidity, there was a very high heat index. Soon even the stronger ones started

dropping in their tracks until there was a local medical emergency requiring the attention of paramedics. The local medical resources were soon overtaxed and help was requested from neighboring communities to treat the heat stroke victims.

In the Imperial Valley the small quakes even caused some panic in the shopping malls and in the big-box warehouse stores where large pallets of inventory are stored on twenty-foot tall racks. The racks started to sway and shift precariously over the people in the aisles below. Most of the employees who knew of the hazards were already slipping outside. The others ran into the center bays where nothing could fall on them. Except maybe the roof!

Here It Comes

At 12:58 p.m. dogs began barking everywhere. In the Imperial and Coachella Valleys and other rural areas, quite a number of coyotes, deer and other fauna were co-mingling and running around aimlessly.

At 1:15 p.m. a very large flap of birds of every description took off and strived for all of the altitude they could get.

Seconds later, there was a sound like a cannon fired, followed by a deep rumbling sound that was heard all over the southwestern U.S. and northwestern Mexico! It sounded like loud thunder or a low-level sonic boom. It was accompanied by a severe P Wave seismic shock that caused heavy objects like parked vehicles to move violently on their own. The P Wave also dumped heavy objects out of the high warehouse racks, shelves, and it unlatched cabinets everywhere. Two seconds later, the S wave arrived followed by the Rayleigh and Love waves with a magnitude in excess of M 9.8. They continued intermittently one after the other for nearly eight minutes. There would be a few moments of lesser shaking, and then it would resume as hard or worse.

Automatically there was an activation of myriad personal and crash locator beacons over a vast area. The international search and rescue centers immediately became aware of a big disaster.

The Rayleigh waves in the Imperial Valley and other alluvial or plains areas looked like ocean waves across dry land, between ten and twelve feet high. They ran continuously at three- to six-second intervals. The destruction and loss of life was catastrophic. The Rayleigh, and Love waves, the side-to-side motions on a perpendicular angle to the Rayleigh waves, everywhere threw people around like helpless rag dolls.

In some areas electric discharges like sheet lightning came out of the earth, causing some to die from cardiac fibrillation or fright. In other areas water and mud geysers shot 60 to 150 feet into the air. These phenomena were occurring in valleys, some cities and rural areas. The earth fractured along secondary faults—the Fullerton, Long Beach, Sylmar, Northridge, Catalina, —and many hitherto unknown faults, including some under the sea just off the coast like the La Jolla Canyon. There were transient ground shifts on the surface everywhere. Liquefaction became a prime factor in alluvial, fill and primeval delta areas.

High-rise buildings in Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Phoenix and all points in between swayed precipitously, some dumping the contents of closets, cabinets, and shelving, and rearranging furniture everywhere. Many stores and shops lost a fortune in wine, liquor, and other bottled products. Church bells rang involuntarily as far away as Portland, Reno, Denver, and Mazatlan, Mexico.

In the cities closer to the epicenter every window was broken, and those in the high-rise buildings fell onto the streets below. All buildings in the Imperial and Coachella Valleys, Yuma, Mexicali-Calexico, Tijuana, Ensenada, as well as those in the San Diego and Los Angeles Metro areas and the Santa Barbara-Ventura complex were totally destroyed. The entire infrastructure was destroyed. All highway and rail bridges failed, pavement was broken and buckled beyond practical use, and all power lines and communication cables were down. Satellite dishes were felled or knocked out of alignment. Underground pipelines and cables were torn apart. Electric

transmission towers lay scattered across the ground and the lines were scattered like wet spaghetti. The wooden and steel pylons and trees, including tall palm trees, were all either snapped off at some level above ground or were simply toppled. All rail lines were twisted and rendered useless. All airport runways were buckled and, in many cases, flooded.

Amazingly, there were little islands, areas of only minor damage, amidst all the havoc, depending on the geological substructure of the earth beneath. All the buildings were destroyed, and almost all of the people were casualties to one degree or other, but short segments of the roads and other infrastructure remained only slightly damaged. Reservoirs in convulsion rocked themselves nearly empty or else their dams failed, loosing floods of water downstream into the urban areas below, drowning thousands of people. All stand pipes and water towers were knocked down. Water and gas mains were broken everywhere. High-pressure gas transmission lines ruptured, squirming their way to the surface and spewing their flaming media like dragon's breath.

In the outlying areas where propane is the gas media, all of the unrestrained tanks were thrown loose, spewing gas as they went, with the same resultant fires as the broken urban mains. Soon the dust and smoke palls blacked out what little sun was shining through the overcast here and there, and visibility over the southwestern U.S. dwindled almost to nothing.

As the surface waves wrecked the land, several offshore faults ruptured, causing some of the coastal islands to create massive submarine avalanches on both their seaward and leeward sides, as well as large submarine canyon avalanches generating massive tsunamis. Seawater weighs well over eight pounds per gallon, and a cubic yard weighs nearly a ton. A tsunami wave comes ashore with millions of cubic yards of water, and the result is a battering ram of unimaginable proportions. The wave obliterates everything in its path as it heads inland. When it recedes, it takes its wreckage and victims out with it. The event repeats over and over and over.

As far south as El Rosario, Mexico and as far north as the Santa Barbara coastal area, tsunami waves of awesome height and mass scoured the coastline. They also wreaked havoc all across the Pacific, from Alaska to East Asia, South America, and all points in between. Afterward, in the quake zone millions of dazed, injured and confused survivors wandered around, picking their way through the huge dust clouds, mud, chaos and wreckage, wondering whether there was going to be a future and how they were going to meet it with just the torn and soiled clothing they were wearing. Very few of them were uninjured, as almost everyone had been thrown around uncontrollably amidst the wreckage of their surroundings.

Those who could gather their wits and look about with any sense of reality immediately began to plan their next steps toward survival. Unfortunately, this included some who were ethically challenged, and that soon became an additional problem for the other survivors, who were striving to make the best of whatever was available.

Chapter Eight

Air Coaster Flight 32

On September 1 at 1:10 p.m. Air Coaster Flight Three Two had taxied out for take-off on Runway two four left at LAX. They were number two in line and the number one, a big German heavy, was just rolling onto the runway. Captain Ron Olney released the brakes, added power, and rolled into the holding position as the number one was cleared for takeoff.

They were still headed perpendicular to the runway, and as he came to a stop, he turned to his Flight Officer Lee Ryan.

"We all set, Lee?"

"Yes Ron. The takeoff checklist is complete, everything is in the green, and with this load the auto take-off computer says GO with V1 (critical takeoff speed) at 125 knots."

Lee looked to his right out of habit to assure himself no one was on final approach to their runway, even though LAX is a controlled airport.

"Jeeze, I can never get over how big those double-deck European busses are. This guy comin' in here at our three o'clock looks like the sky is falling."

Leaning forward, Ron said, "Yeah, I'll say. Look at that monster!"

Just then the tower cleared them with—"Coaster Three Two, line up and wait."

Ron released the brakes and added power, turning his big Boeing twin engine heavy onto the runway centerline. He advised the tower-

"Coaster Three Two in position and ready for take off."

The tower came back, "Roger, Coaster Three Two, standby. Immediately on liftoff contact Departure Control on twenty-five point two. Over."

"Twenty-five point two, Roger."

At 1:15 p.m. the tower called- "Coaster Three Two cleared for takeoff."

As Ron applied power and released the brakes, Lee keyed the mike... "Coaster Thirty-Two rolling."

The thrust of the big fanjets literally shoved the seats forward into their posteriors and the thrill of rushing off into the blue was renewed. Lee switched the radio to the Departure frequency, anticipating liftoff. As they accelerated through 90 knots, he noticed the big bus over on the right runway was just beginning to pass them while landing in a huge cloud of white tire smoke.

Suddenly they were lifted tail first as if the nose gear had disappeared.

Ron yelled, "Knock it off, dammit!"

"I didn't do it! Look out! We're veering to the right! We're going into the dirt!"

He stabbed the left brake pedal hard, hoping to help correct the course.

Ron yelled, "Abort the takeoff! I can't hold her, Lee!"

As he reached to apply reverse thrust and deploy the spoilers, he stood on both brake pedals. The big plane pitched nose down, still going off the right side of the runway into the rain-softened midfield where first the right main, then the nose gear, sank into the ground and tore away from the airframe.

"Oh, Jesus, Lee! Hang on!"

The big turbofans were spooling up for reverse thrust, and as the right engine ingested the muddy turf it exploded, sending white-hot fragments into the fuselage and the right wing tanks, resulting in a huge fireball and total disaster for all on board.



Paleo-geological discoveries bear evidence of great earth movements unknown in recorded history. However, in these stories a catastrophic earthquake destroys all infrastructures in the southwest corner of the United States and the northwest corner of Mexico in the near future. This is an anthology of fictional short stories, with some cross characterization, all connected to a common time and event. These tales are the result of a very vivid dream of an elderly author.

A Shattered Paradise

Order the complete book from

[Booklocker.com](http://www.booklocker.com)

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/7456.html?s=pdf>

**or from your favorite neighborhood
or online bookstore.**