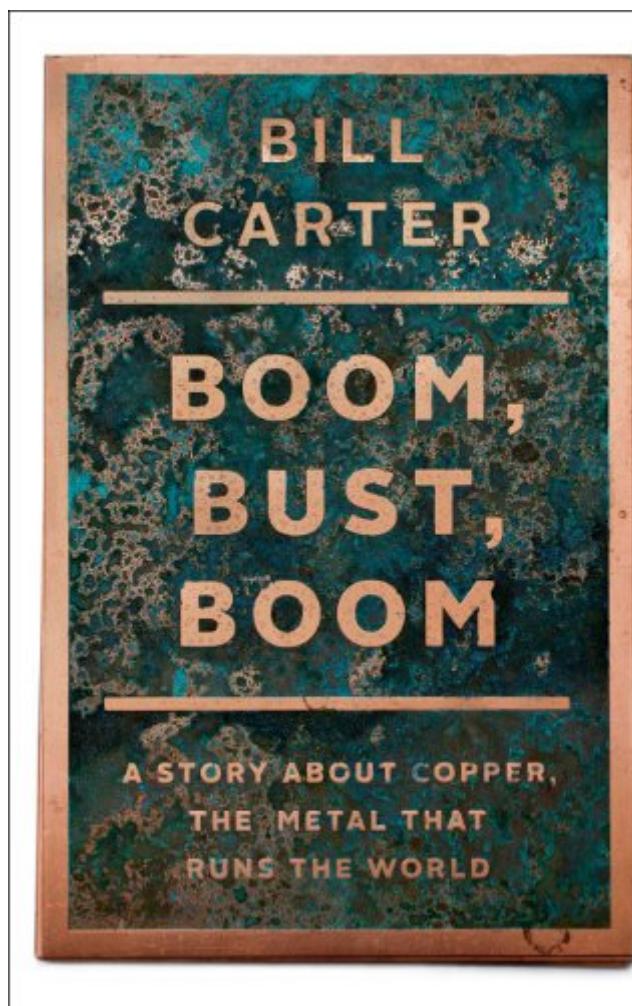


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# Boom, Bust, Boom: A Story About Copper, The Metal That Runs The World



## Synopsis

From *A* “a first-rate writer in the fascinating tradition of Junger and Krakauer” (Jim Harrison, author of *Legends of the Fall*), a sweeping account of civilization’s complete dependence on copper and what it all means for people, nature, and the global economy. **A SWEEPING ACCOUNT OF CIVILIZATION’S COMPLETE DEPENDENCE ON COPPER AND WHAT IT MEANS FOR PEOPLE, NATURE, AND OUR GLOBAL ECONOMY** *COPPER* is a miraculous and contradictory metal, essential to nearly every human enterprise. For most of recorded history, this remarkably pliable and sturdy substance has proven invaluable: not only did the ancient Romans build their empire on mining copper but Christopher Columbus protected his ships from rot by lining their hulls with it. Today, the metal can be found in every house, car, airplane, cell phone, computer, and home appliance the world over, including in all the new, so-called green technologies. Yet the history of copper extraction and our present relationship with the metal are fraught with profound difficulties. Copper mining causes irrevocable damage to the Earth, releasing arsenic, cyanide, sulfuric acid, and other deadly pollutants into the air and water. And the mines themselves have significant effects on the economies and wellbeing of the communities where they are located. With *Red Summer* and *Fools Rush In*, Bill Carter has earned a reputation as an on-the-ground journalist adept at connecting the local elements of a story to its largest consequences. Carter does this again—and brilliantly—in *Boom, Bust, Boom*, exploring in an entertaining and fact-rich narrative the very human dimension of copper extraction and the colossal implications the industry has for every one of us. Starting in his own backyard in the old mining town of Bisbee, Arizona—where he discovers that the dirt in his garden contains double the acceptable level of arsenic—Bill Carter follows the story of copper to the controversial Grasberg copper mine in Indonesia; to the “ring” at the London Metal Exchange, where a select group of traders buy and sell enormous amounts of the metal; and to an Alaskan salmon run threatened by mining. *Boom, Bust, Boom* is a highly readable account—part social history, part mining-town exploration, and part environmental investigation. Page by page, Carter blends the personal and the international in a narrative that helps us understand the paradoxical relationship we have with a substance whose necessity to civilization costs the environment and the people who mine it dearly. The result is a work of first-rate journalism that fascinates on every level.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

The scientific/mining part of this book is full of errors and is generally lazily written. His comments on mining/geology/engineering/chemistry are riddled with errors that could have been prevented with even a cursory attempt at fact checking. Whatever merits his comments on the social impacts of mining, the whole book is an exercise in NIMBYism, preconceived conclusions and "truthiness".

Bill Carter's "Boom, Bust, Boom" is an excellent book that will wake you up to the importance and dangers of the world's most extraordinary metal - copper. Copper is a cheap conductive metal that is used in modern society's everything. Beautiful and extremely beneficial to the human race, copper also has a dark side: mining and extracting it from the earth is extremely toxic - sulfuric acid, arsenic, cyanide - just to name a few, that poison the land along with the aquifer underneath. The subtitle says it all - "A Story About Copper, The Metal That Runs The World." Bill's book lays out all of copper's uses and unique properties along with the metal's history throughout civilization. The other side of copper's story though is the basis of this well written book - the extreme environmental dangers of mining and extracting it from the Earth. Bill started this book after he ate from his vegetable garden he had planted in his yard - Bisbee, Arizona - home of a large but now idle copper

mine. Investigating why he was poisoned - this book is that answer. The main focus is to ask ourselves a question: where should we and should we not mine copper? The answer became obvious to me - thank you Bill! That brings this story to Bristol Bay, Alaska - home to the world's largest salmon spawning area, which is also key to that wilderness' survival. Underneath the wilderness' streams and rivers that make up Bristol Bay's salmon spawning area lies an estimated \$500 billion deposit of copper and gold. Saving Bristol Bay from toxic copper mining that will ruin that rich fishery forever is a noble cause. I grew up on the Mesabi Iron Range, northeastern Minnesota - home to some of the world's largest open pit taconite mines. I loved growing up on the Range exploring those mines and the rich history of mining iron ore and taconite. This book caused a major paradigm shift with me about mining - I thought all hard-metal mines were the same. Now know they are not. Copper is not anything like taconite... I also thought green energy could save the world.

Green energy needs lots of copper to function - therefore if it does save the world from hydrocarbons, it will not save the world from more toxic copper extraction. Which is worse? I highly recommend this book - we need knowledge to debate these issues and come up with real solutions to our civilization's hardest hurdles - what to do about this fast juggernaut called population growth - that is destroying the Earth out of both our need and greed. Thank you for reading my review... dbk

The author gives a lot of personal information which provides the book with an added dimension of personalization and how copper has affected him, his family and those he met while researching the book. Sometimes the opinions are fun and other times, I just skipped over them because all I wanted out of the book was hard facts. But overall, his story within the information is worthwhile and often sounds like you're just listening to a friend's story. Carter imparted a great deal of information that was well researched, but personal enough not to become dull and archaic. I'm really glad I read this book, it was a couple chapters a night and I underlined a lot of information that even I, who spent 4 years in the copper business in Latin America, wasn't aware of. Overall, a very good book. Thank you Bill for all your hard work.

Bill Carter is one of the few authors who can guarantee a page-turner with each non-fiction topic he tackles. *Boom, Bust, Boom* is no exception. In this book, he examines both our need for copper on a global scale and the potential damage it can cause to the environment. He uses personal stories and research to narrate his quest for answers, which makes the topic more accessible than one would expect. His prose is honest and conversational; his facts straightforward and informative. I'd recommend this book to anyone wishing to learn more about copper or merely looking for an

addictive read.

A really good read

Very interesting boom. Autobiographical, but also technically proficient information about the copper mining industry. I learned a great deal about the politics behind mining and the effects of copper mining on the citizens. I wouldn't call Bill Carter the Erin Brockovich of Arizona mining, but this book brings out a lot of information that the mining industry probably doesn't want people to know. Easy to read and well-written.

A very informative and thought-provoking read. Mr. Carter pens an excellent book from a parent's perspective of the values and vices of copper. I plan to visit Bisbee soon partially based on this book. First to see this fascinating town and second to do so before it is irrevocably altered/destroyed by the mine that gave it birth.

Carter's book is a fascinating combination of personal narrative, history, science, and commentary about how copper is mined and traded in the U.S., but also as a global commodity. Here in northern Minn., we are facing the prospect of a multinational copper corporation coming to mine copper near the border lakes. This book has given me vital information about why we must continue to fight it.

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