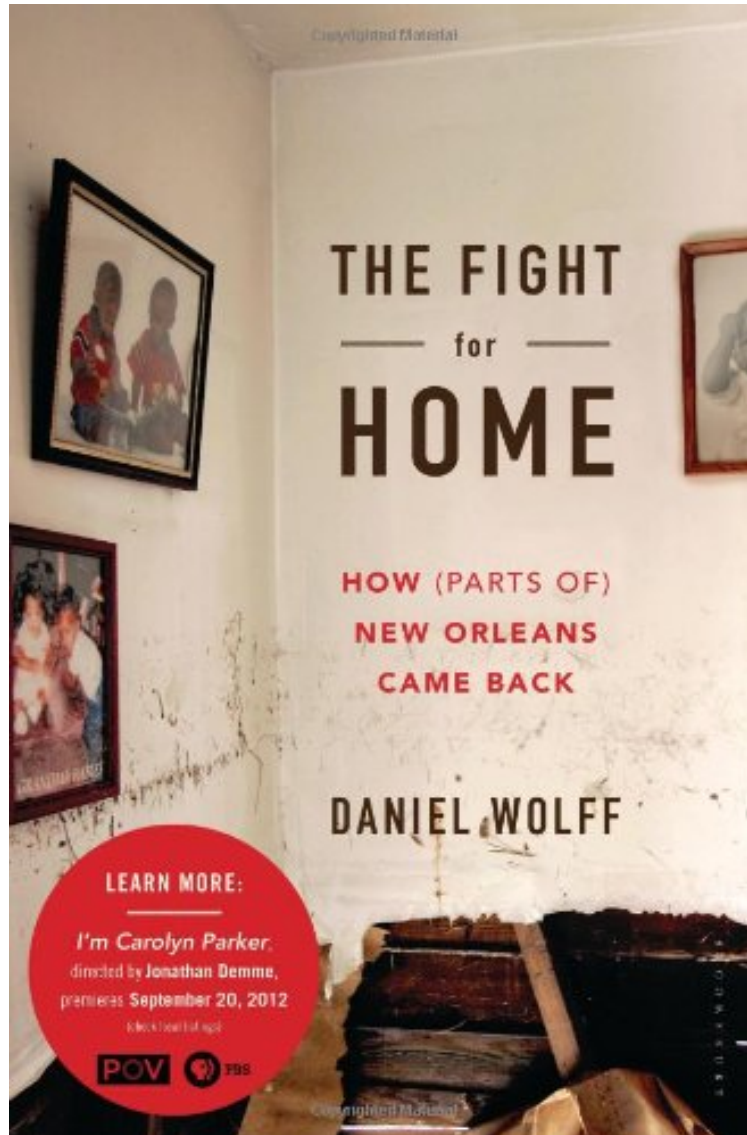


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## The Fight for Home: How (Parts of) New Orleans Came Back

*Daniel Wolff*

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**Daniel Wolff : The Fight for Home: How (Parts of) New Orleans Came Back** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Fight for Home: How (Parts of) New Orleans Came Back:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Handbook for Activists By Craig Werner On the surface, The Fight for Home is a gripping set of stories about people and communities struggling to rebuild in the wake of Katrina. Wolff is a first-rate stylist, as he's demonstrated previously in his biography of Sam Cooke (You Send Me, which is quite a

bit better than Peter Guralnick's more widely publicized *Dream Boggie*); *How Lincoln Learned to Read*; and *Fourth of July, Asbury Park*. His portraits of his main figures are memorable, and he sets scenes with economy and grace. There's a mixture of determination and suffering reminiscent of the blues. That's more than enough to justify a strong review, but Wolff goes beyond the story by incorporating a kind of shadow book focusing on the possibilities and problems of various approaches to political activism. He gives serious attention to the relationship between church-based activism, secular community organizing (based on various types of political belief), celebrity charity initiatives, and the almost-entirely ineffective government programs. He demonstrates the problems with white volunteerism in primarily black communities; probes the changing demographics of New Orleans; acknowledges the reality of infiltration and betrayal. By the time I finished, I was convinced this is a near-perfect book for would-be activists, one that provides test scenarios in their full complexity. That's close to my working definition for great fiction: it provides us with thick models of reality that allow us to think through moral and political and existential decisions before we encounter them in our lives. One of the top half-dozen books of the year. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. *Rebuilding from the Rebuilders' Perspective*. By M. Dillon All one has been likely to see about Hurricane Katrina has been the view of government agents at all levels. Or maybe the old, established non-government organizations. Or maybe 'experts' of various stripes. This book ignores nearly all of them. Instead it focuses on a variety of residents of New Orleans and neighboring communities and their words. Sometimes these are thoughtful, sometimes cries of pain, or joy. There is thankfulness and a sense of betrayal and some of each is rather surprising. Reading this one can feel sweaty even on a cold night, or like one's hands are dirty even a thousand miles away and having never lifted a finger. Please buy and read this book. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. *Voices That Should Be Heard* By Booklover As I write this, my family in New Orleans is evacuating from another hurricane in the Gulf, unsure if it will be a false alarm or another unimaginable nightmare like Katrina. It makes me realize that what Daniel Wolff writes about in *The Fight for Home* is more than the study of an isolated disaster. This book looks at how we in America choose to define ourselves, how we in America respond when one of our own is decimated, and ultimately, simply, how we treat each other. I admire Mr. Wolff for his ability to set his ego aside in this work. There is no strong narrative voice, no heavy-handed assertions from the author. He follows the lives of several New Orleanians for five years as they struggle to rebuild their home in a decimated, disoriented, often lawless city, and he lets these people speak for themselves. It is their voices that have been denied, this book seems to be saying, their voices that have immeasurable value and deserve to be heard. I couldn't agree more.

After the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, New Orleans became ground zero for the reinvention of the American city, with urban planners, movie stars, anarchists, and politicians all advancing their competing visions of recovery. In this wash of reform, residents and volunteers from across the country struggled to build the foundations of a new New Orleans. For over five years, author Daniel Wolff has documented an amazing cross section of the city in upheaval: a born-again preacher with a ministry of ex-addicts, a former Black Panther organizing for a new cause, a single mother, "broke as a joke" in a FEMA trailer. *The Fight for Home* chronicles their battle to survive not just the floods, but the corruption that continues and the base-level emergency of poverty and neglect. From ruin to limbo to triumphant return, Wolff offers an intimate look at the lives of everyday American heroes. As these lives play out against the ruined local landscape and an emerging national recession, *The Fight for Home* becomes a story of resilience and hope.

About the Author Daniel Wolff is the author of *How Lincoln Learned to Read*, a Chicago Tribune Editor's Choice pick; *4th of July, Asbury Park*, a New York Times Book Editor's Choice pick; *You Send Me: The Life and Times of Sam Cooke*, a national bestseller; and two volumes of poetry, among other books. His writing has appeared in publications ranging from *Vogue* to *Wooden Boat* to *Education Weekly*. He is the co-producer, with Jonathan Demme, of several documentary film projects on New Orleans.