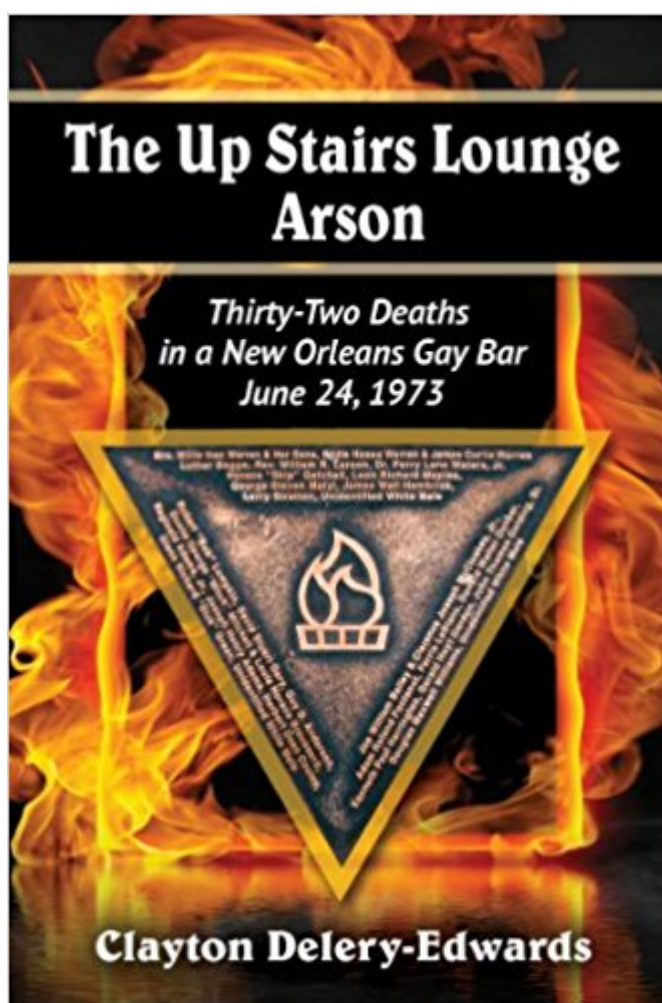


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# The Up Stairs Lounge Arson: Thirty-Two Deaths In A New Orleans Gay Bar, June 24, 1973



## Synopsis

On June 24, 1973, a fire in a New Orleans gay bar killed 32 people. This still stands as the deadliest fire in the city's history. Though arson was suspected, and though the police identified a likely culprit, no arrest was ever made. Additionally, government and religious leaders who normally would have provided moral leadership at a time of crisis were either silent or were openly disdainful of the dead, most of whom were gay men. Based upon review of hundreds of primary and secondary sources, including contemporary news accounts, interviews with former patrons of the lounge, and the extensive documentary trail left behind by the criminal investigations, *The Up Stairs Lounge Arson* tells the story of who used to go to this bar, what happened on the day of the fire, what course the investigations took, why an arrest was never made, and what the lasting effects of the fire have been.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

...returns to a tragic moment to deliver new insights into the social history of New

Orleans.--Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.A chilling tale of arson, homophobia, and the

deaths of 32 people, the book takes a look at the harrowing night that became the largest mass

killing of LGBT people on American soil.Â But it also reveals the truly horrifying level of homophobia

that turned a tragedy into something far worse...--Diane Anderson-Minshall, Advocate.comThe Up

Stairs Lounge Arson is an amazing and emotional read for anyone wanting to learn more about New

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gay people who have no idea how deep the homophobia of the late 20th century ran.---Kit van

Cleve, Out Smart Magazine....returns to a tragic moment to deliver new insights into the social history of New Orleans.--Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.A chilling tale of arson, homophobia, and the deaths of 32 people, the book takes a look at the harrowing night that became the largest mass killing of LGBT people on American soil.Â But it also reveals the truly horrifying level of homophobia that turned a tragedy into something far worse... --Diane Anderson-Minshall, Advocate.com  
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Clayton Delery-Edwards is a member of the faculty of the Louisiana School for Math, Science, and the Arts in Natchitoches, Louisiana. The Up Stairs Lounge Arson has been named Book of the Year by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities, and it is a finalist for a 2015 Lambda Literary Award in LGBT Nonfiction.

This is a great study on a true tragedy which got little notice when it happened. I'm a friend of the author, but I'd still give it 5 stars. If you want a look at New Orleans, Louisiana in the 1970's, this book will open the door. If you would like to see how the gay community lived in 1970's New Orleans, this is the book. I lived in the area at the time, and even as a straight, married man, I couldn't believe the jokes which prevailed on the radio, daily for weeks. Thirty-two families lost loved ones in this 19-minute fire, but because it was a gay bar, it apparently at the time, was the object of hilarity. This is a very moving story. Get it now.

I don't often read non-fiction, but I was drawn to this book because of the subject matter. I lived in the French Quarter in New Orleans just a few years after this fire in a gay bar killed 32 people. I heard about the fire, but not much. People did not want to talk about it - even gay people who had friends who were killed. The author gives a thorough account of the possible causes of the fire, the people involved, and the lack of attention the fire got, especially from the government, the press, and most of the local clergy. He accurately draws the parallel between the attitude about these deaths with the attitude of many in power when the AIDS epidemic hit. In this book, New Orleans serves as a microcosm for the need for the LGBT community to band together to fight for their rights as citizens and as human beings, and also for the attitude of many in positions of authority, to marginalize people who are different. That attempt to deny rights to the LGBT community happened

when this fire hit the gay bar in New Orleans, as the AIDS epidemic ravished and continues to ravish the gay community and people of color, and continues today in the efforts to legalize discrimination. I recommend it to anyone who is interested in these issues, and to those who want to find out more about what happened.

Great book, the author traces the steps of the purported culprit-----not an easy task after 40 years----and plenty of detail of what/who/when. The event was a lurid one----dead bodies visible from the street for hours, burned to the bone, etc-----but Clayton shows himself to be a storyteller that makes the most of the information without dwelling on the most grotesque aspects. (I lived in NOLA for 2 1/2 years in the early 80s, nobody mentioned this incident to me, and we didn't have the internet to discover it any other way)

An important event in LGBT history, the Up Stairs Lounge fire was a tragic moment that was nearly forgotten until recently. This beautifully-written, well-researched book tells the story of the fire and its aftermath clearly and with great compassion, placing the event within its greater historical context. A must-have for anyone interested in LGBT history.

A thoughtful, somber analysis of the New Orleans 1973 tragedy and the times in which it occurred. Well-researched and insightful.

Excellent. Highly recommend

Excellent account of a tragic incident!

I contributed material to the work of this author, so there is a prejudice here. However, he amalgamated my material into his overall presentation. It is an easy book to read. It is logical and presents a complete picture of the status of New Orleans at the time of the fire. This event needs to be recorded for purposes of history for the broader community as well as for the LGBT communities. The author has done an excellent job of presenting a balanced overview of the local community as well as a fair and good representation of the facts about the event and subsequent actions.

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