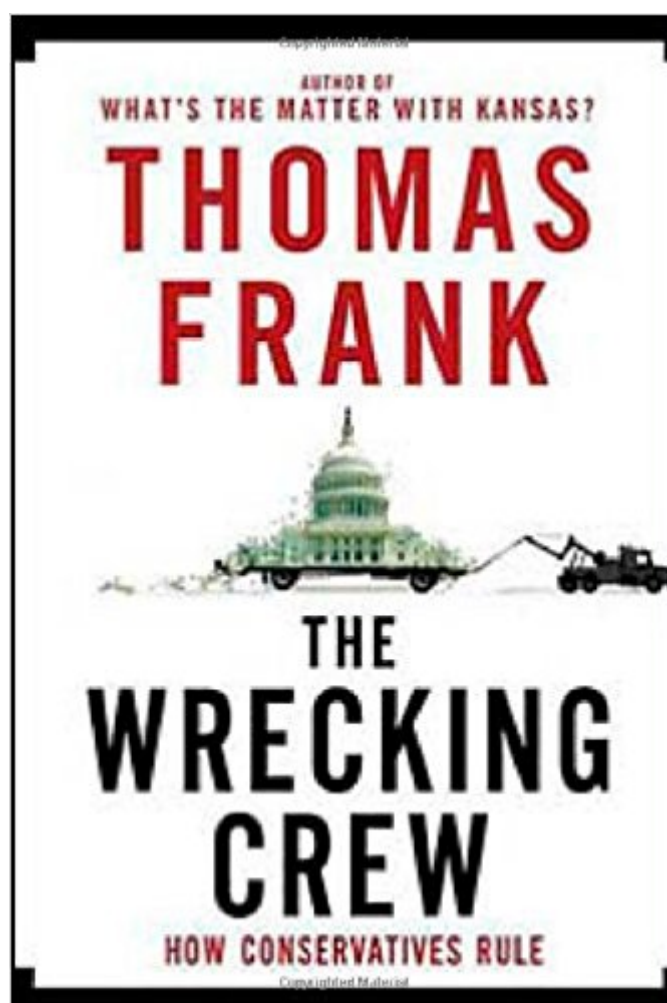


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# The Wrecking Crew: How Conservatives Ruined Government, Enriched Themselves, And Beggared The Nation



## Synopsis

From the author of the landmark bestseller *What's the Matter with Kansas?*, a jaw-dropping investigation of the decades of deliberate and lucrative conservative misrule. In his previous book, Thomas Frank explained why working America votes for politicians who reserve their favors for the rich. Now, in *The Wrecking Crew*, Frank examines the blundering and corrupt Washington those politicians have given us. Casting his eyes from the Bush administration's final months of plunder to the earliest days of the Republican revolution, Frank describes the rise of a ruling coalition dedicated to dismantling government. But rather than cutting down the big government they claim to hate, conservatives have simply sold it off, deregulating some industries, defunding others, but always turning public policy into a private-sector bidding war. Washington itself has been remade into a golden landscape of super-wealthy suburbs and gleaming lobbyist headquarters—the wages of government-by-entrepreneurship practiced so outrageously by figures such as Jack Abramoff. It is no coincidence, Frank argues, that the same politicians who guffaw at the idea of effective government have installed a regime in which incompetence is the rule. Nor will the country easily shake off the consequences of deliberate misgovernment through the usual election remedies. Obsessed with achieving a lasting victory, conservatives have taken pains to enshrine the free market as the permanent creed of state. Stamped with Thomas Frank's audacity, analytic brilliance, and wit, *The Wrecking Crew* is his most revelatory work yet and his most important.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Frank paints a complex and conspiracy-ridden picture that illuminates the sinister and controversial practices of the Republican party in the 20th and 21st centuries. While Frank's assessments and interpretations of key events, players and party doctrines is accurate and justifiable, his overwhelming blame of the Republican Party as the source of everything that's wrong with this country and as the emblem of self-destructing government denies the Democrats and the citizenry their roles in a decaying democracy. Wyman's matter-of-fact delivery hints at the obviousness of Frank's words, but provides enough enthusiasm to make listeners believe he, too, is invested in Frank's message. His emphasis and vigor keep the text enjoyable, long after the rant of Republican despotism has become excessive. A Metropolitan Books hardcover (Reviews, May 26). (Aug.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“A no-holds-barred exegesis on the naked cynicism of conservatism in America.”  
Kirkus Reviews, starred review  
“Written with barbed wit and finely controlled anger, he skewers such juicy targets as libertarian strategist Grover Norquist and Michelle Malkin.”  
Publishers Weekly, starred review  
“Glorious” Often brilliant  
Frank's gloom is leavened by an eye for the unexpected and the absurd.  
Los Angeles Times  
“Well-researched and witty” Provides a powerful liberal antidote to the high-volume rantings of Bill O'Reilly, Ann Coulter and Fox News.  
Seattle Post-Intelligencer  
“Frank's gifts as a social observer are on display” His analysis of why there are so many libertarian think tanks in a country with so few libertarians is dead on. In Thomas Frank, the American left has found its own Juvenal.  
The New York Times Book Review  
“Frank offers one damning anecdote after another. The Wrecking Crew explains how cynical conservatives have wrested control of the government by railing against its very existence, all while using federal perches to funnel billions into the pockets of lobbyists and the corporations they represent.”  
Time  
“Thomas Frank is back with another hunk of dynamite. The Wrecking Crew should monopolize political conversation this year. It's the first book to effectively tie the ruin and corruption of conservative governance to the conservative “movement building” of the 1970s, and, before that, the business crusade against good government going back at least to the 1890s.”  
Salon.com  
“Tom Frank has hold of something real. The Wrecking Crew can be good, spirited fun. Frank captures a quality of exuberant bullying in those of his conservative subjects he knows well enough to identify

individually, rather than categorically. *The New Yorker* “Frank’s sentences inhale and unfurl with a wit and verve *The New York Observer* “Conservatives in office have made their share of blunders and mistakes, and Frank is at his finest in depicting some of the stunning instances of hypocrisy and idiocy in the period of Republican rule. *The New York Post* “Smart, thoroughly researched, and written with wit and panache. *The Wichita Eagle* “A welcome read. There is no doubt that Frank is helping to restore the journalistic and literary standards to political books. *Elegant* | *The Wrecking Crew* has the rhetorical power to illustrate the dire consequences of a government sold off piece by piece to the highest bidder. One finishes the book feeling as if one’s political vision has been brought into focus. *The Courier-Journal* “A superb follow-up to *What’s The Matter with Kansas?*... Thorough reporting and incisive historical analysis. With genuine outrage and blasts of polemic, but Frank never allows *The Wrecking Crew* to become just another seething right- or left-wing political tract preaching to the choir. *The Oregonian* “Frank brings invaluable insider perceptions, ardor, and precision to his lancing inquiry into the erosion of democracy and the enshrinement of the mighty dollar | An electrifying, well-researched analysis of ‘conservatism-as-profiteering.’ This staggering history of systematic greed with inject new energy into public discourse as a historical election looms. *Booklist* (starred review) “The author of the best-selling *What’s the Matter with Kansas?* Examines the political, social, and economic consequences of several decades of deliberate and lucrative conservative misrule, revealing how Washington has been remade into a world of economic disparity, lobbyists, and incompetence. *Forecast*

An interesting view of what the various conservative movements have been up to since the 80’s. The book is meticulously researched and I’m impressed with the author’s encyclopaedic knowledge of the whos, whats and whens in politics. Like a lot of political books, deeply depressing, but that’s just what I get from it. I’d give it five stars, but it is relentlessly partisan. For the most part, it’s a huge list of misdeeds done by Republicans, with some of the equally corrupt Democratic misdeeds mentioned only in passing. I realise the book is specifically about conservative ‘rule’, but the author does us a disservice by not trying to put things into context.

A great book, filled with insights and solid, useful references. The founders of the modern conservative movement did indeed call for the destruction of government in order to unleash capital.

It's all here, very readable and entertaining. Frank is a fine writer.-- A bit of a scary book, actually, and there's one chapter missing: Just what are we supposed to do with this information? Fuel for the pyres of political reputations no doubt, but what now? If it could be made mandatory material for voters and journalists, I would be comfortable with it. As it is, I'm not sure this book isn't just a big, black bird of some sort, sitting on a bust of H.L. Mencken and croaking "Evermore!" at regular intervals.

good book

This book just validates my way of thinking that the right wing politicians are bent on making government look bad by governing in a sure-to-fail way. The author describes a number of instances on how they go about "de-funding the left". Too many good people fall for this plan and keep electing Republicans to the House and Senate.

thanks!

A clear and concise explanation of a political dismantled democracy that works for the top 1%.

Want to know why it seems that--time after time--many ordinary Americans wonder, how the Federal Government can be quite so BAD?? - - why some governmental idea--even when they turn out to be very important and useful for common citizens--turn sour, no longer doing the job assigned? Here it is: There has existed, exists, will continue to exist a powerful group of people who WANT IT THAT WAY !! So when they get into power, they DELIBERATELY prove that "Government doesn't work"--or even worse, that it works only for the already wealthy, powerful, and well-placed. ("Small government" often meant "Destroy Government"--but now-- Let's think: Why destroy government when you can make it work essentially only for YOU?) The last 7+ years have demonstrated the culmination of such thinking and planning--and its RESULTS: Extensive, costly fraud; agencies no longer run by people who know their task with intention to carry it out; huge, long-term, government-breaking, program-deleting debt; weak, non-existent, defective accountability; exiting of capable "bureaucrats;" priorities based on \$\$\$ and powers involved rather than the needs and security of the nation; etc., etc. I (maybe you, too) thought it was "a difference in democratic political philosophy," a "bad egg" here and there, crises necessitating decisive action, etc. Maybe--to some extent; sometimes-- but underneath has been, is, and will be powerful efforts

to subvert the purposes of government to the wants and desires of the already and "would be" powerful. Don't believe it? Dare then to read this carefully documented book--definitely impressive and definitely DEpressive . The case seems tight; what to do about it is, I fear, given very short shrift. Much more work to do . . .

If you don't understand what the Republican Right Winges have done to our country DEMOCRACY, then you need to listen to this cd. I originally got from our local Library & liked it so much that I decided to buy it for my friends & family to listen to.

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