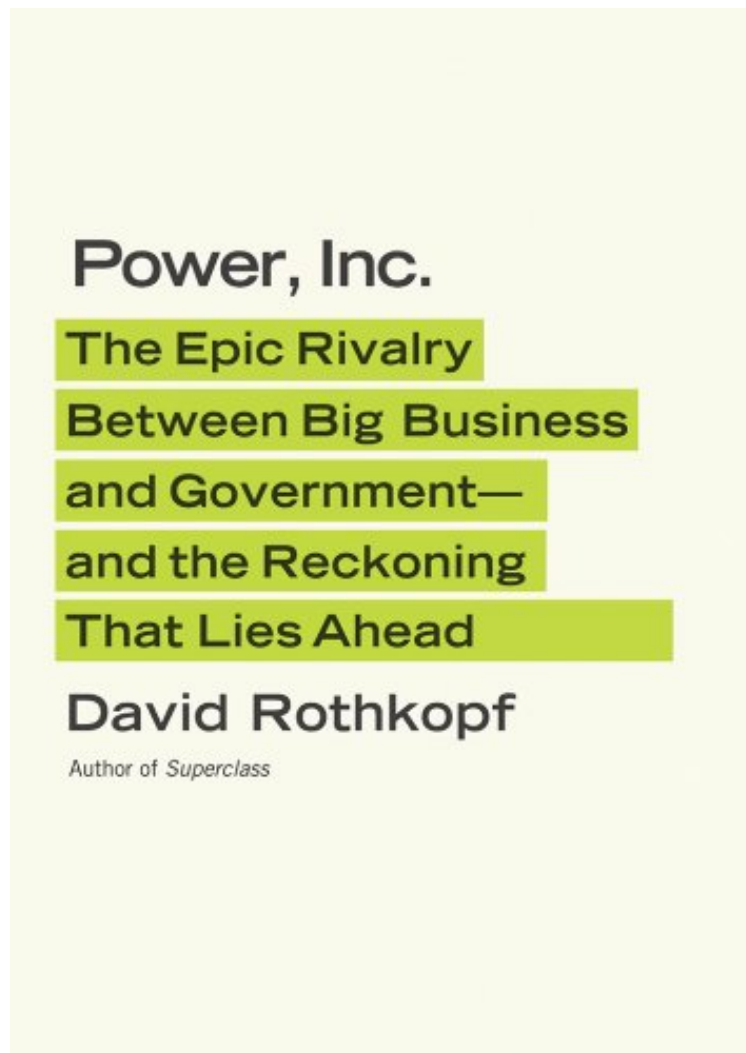


[FREE] Power, Inc.: The Epic Rivalry Between Big Business and Government--and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead

Power, Inc.: The Epic Rivalry Between Big Business and Government--and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead

David Rothkopf

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David Rothkopf : Power, Inc.: The Epic Rivalry Between Big Business and Government--and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Power, Inc.: The Epic Rivalry Between Big Business and Government--and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. A Great--yet Incomplete--Book About The Evolution of Power...But Not Really About a ReckoningBy E. WhiteI want to start out by pointing out what this book is not: Power, Inc. cannot be characterized as being about the reckoning that lies ahead between corporations and governments. More accurately, it is a historical analysis on how the relationship between corporations (and other trans-national entities) and states

came to be. More than likely, the accuracy of the book's cover copy fell victim to a zealous marketer who wanted to amp up the conflict a little, despite Rothkopf's clear efforts to remain as neutral as possible. I'll admit, it did lead to a slight letdown, despite the book's other good qualities. With that distinction made, the book is a fascinating and accessible primer on the origins, evolution, and nature of power, with a scope spanning from medieval times right up until the date of publication. While I don't necessarily agree with Rothkopf's interpretation of some events, I felt it was an accurate enough dissection and characterization of the factors that influence governance that I started recommending it to friends and coworkers as a good way to grasp what gave an entity legitimate power in the eyes of the people. However, something about the book wasn't sitting well with me, and I couldn't put my finger on it until I was approaching the book's final chapters: Rothkopf hardly talks about the people, or their role in the mix of power. In fact, it is only in the very last line that he acknowledges that all power accrued by either a corporation or a government flows from the consent of the people to either part with their money or be governed. In a book about power--especially in a book about the power of corporations--you'd think the influence of the proletariat would play a bigger role. Perhaps Rothkopf didn't want to wade into the complexity and capriciousness associated with teasing apart the power of the people and its influence on world events in a book he intended to be straightforward and streamlined but, more likely, I believe he was probably writing about what he knows. Rothkopf comes from the inner circles of power elites (which he hints at often in the book) who already hold sway over large constituencies, either political or commercial, and believe the influence they've derived from that control is a given. It's not, and I need point no further than the Arab Spring to show how tenuous even a dictator's grasp on power really is. If you're wondering why I docked a star from Power, Inc, the fact Rothkopf glossed over this key component of the nature and balance of power (only giving it a token nod at the end of his book) is why. Returning to the reckoning, I think Rothkopf is trying to advocate a strengthening of government oversight on corporations and the creation of a supra-national governing entity. I say "I think," because Rothkopf is fastidiously neutral, which is nice most of the time, but it also makes it hard to tell where he's coming from. To his credit, I think he advocates this viewpoint only because he's trying to find an oversight structure equivalent to the operating environment multinational corporations have created for themselves. This would, of course, be a reckoning because it would represent a massive increase in government power and coordination...but there are no signs that's going to happen anytime soon, despite the ovations Rothkopf's circles are making in that direction; there is simply too much mistrust in the international community and not enough damage on the part of multinationals for the people to rise up against them. At the end of the day, money is power, and even with the growing inequity, people have power. We accidentally kill companies all the time simply because they went out of style and couldn't figure out what the people wanted. Whether it's taxes or sales, companies and governments cannot survive without the consent of the people, and I wish Rothkopf had factored that into his calculations more, instead of assuming the world's population would always play the part of willing pawn. I wish I could dock him more stars for what I think is a gross oversight, but the book was otherwise really well done and mostly covered a time when people thought (and generally accepted that) God had made them pawns, and he does a pretty good job of it. In conclusion, Power, Inc. does a really good job of outlining how the ecosystem of private and public power that exists today came to be, but is more of a history book leading up to a current imbalance of power instead of a thorough analysis of how that imbalance can/might/would/should correct itself. The book is fastidiously neutral, which is mostly quite nice and refreshing, but it extends to his analysis, where I wish he'd take a stronger stand and state his beliefs clearly. He almost completely ignores a major component of the power mix, though, and I think the book is incomplete for it...but it's definitely usable, accessible, accurate in the things it does cover, and fun to read. If I knew what I know now about the book before I read it, I probably still would have read it. Side note: Incidentally, I also used the Whispersync function (Power, Inc.: The Epic Rivalry between Big Business and Government - and the Reckoning That Lies Ahead) while making my way through this book so I could listen while I commuted. The narration was crisp and lively, and it did a good job of holding my attention while I drove. If you like audiobooks, or just spend a lot of time using your eyes for things other than reading, but not your mind, I recommend considering this alternate format.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Consequences of imbalance between the state and the "have's". By Ntime Samson Mokhine This book provided a clear picture of the consequences of "unregulated / unguided / careless" decision making by private business. It answered my questions that sought to seek the relationship between the state and the super-rich on how they (elite) are capable of creating a crisis through careless financial decisions. The book is factual and reflects on the real-life cases that many economies can learn from in order to avoid falling in the same challenges that were faced by the country in question and the global response to the crisis at that time and the challenges of recovering from such a crisis. The book is well written and forces the reader to continue reading to get a clear picture on how the "mischief" happened and the attempts to resolve it. This is one of my best books on the shelf - a must have.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Unwelcome ideas but good for thought By Bruce Robertson I read this a couple of years ago and found it intriguing and informative. It certainly stirred my existing pot of ideas and reread it recently in preparation for a book group discussion. I have been looking forward to chewing the ideas in this book with others since I first encountered it.

The world's largest company, Wal-Mart Stores, has revenues higher than the GDP of all but twenty-five of the world's countries. Its employees outnumber the populations of almost a hundred nations. The world's largest asset manager, a secretive New York company called Black Rock, controls assets greater than the national reserves of any country on the planet. A private philanthropy, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, spends as much worldwide on health care as the World Health Organization. The rise of private power may be the most important and least understood trend of our time. David Rothkopf provides a fresh, timely look at how we have reached a point where thousands of companies have greater power than all but a handful of states. Beginning with the story of an inquisitive Swedish goat wandering off from his master and inadvertently triggering the birth of the oldest company still in existence, Power, Inc. follows the rise and fall of kings and empires, the making of great fortunes, and the chaos of bloody revolutions. A fast-paced tale in which champions of liberty are revealed to be paid pamphleteers of moneyed interests and greedy scoundrels trigger changes that lift billions from deprivation, Power, Inc. traces the bruising jockeying for influence right up to today's financial crises, growing inequality, broken international system, and battles over the proper role of government and markets. Rothkopf argues that these recent developments, coupled with the rise of powers like China and India, may not lead to the triumph of American capitalism that was celebrated just a few years ago. Instead, he considers an unexpected scenario, a contest among competing capitalisms offering different visions for how the world should work, a global ideological struggle in which European and Asian models may have advantages. An important look at the power struggle that is defining our times, Power, Inc. also offers critical insights into how to navigate the tumultuous years ahead.