



Confidence Men: Wall Street, Washington, and the Education of a President

Ron Suskind

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The hidden history of Wall Street and the White House comes down to a single, powerful, quintessentially American concept: confidence. Both centers of power, tapping brazen innovations over the past three decades, learned how to manufacture it.

Until August 2007, when that confidence finally began to crumble.

In this gripping and brilliantly reported book, Ron Suskind tells the story of what happened next, as Wall Street struggled to save itself while a man with little experience and soaring rhetoric emerged from obscurity to usher in “a new era of responsibility.” It is a story that follows the journey of Barack Obama, who rose as the country fell, and offers the first full portrait of his tumultuous presidency.

Wall Street found that straying from long-standing principles of transparency, accountability, and fair dealing opened a path to stunning profits. Obama’s determination to reverse that trend was essential to his ascendance, especially when Wall Street collapsed during the fall of an election year and the two candidates could audition for the presidency by responding to a national crisis. But as he stood on the stage in Grant Park, a shudder went through Barack Obama. He would now have to command Washington, tame New York, and rescue the economy in the first real management job of his life.

The new president surrounded himself with a team of seasoned players—like Rahm Emanuel, Larry Summers, and Tim Geithner—who had served a different president in a different time. As the nation’s crises deepened, Obama’s deputies often ignored the president’s decisions—“to protect him from himself”—while they fought to seize control of a rudderless White House. Bitter disputes—between men and women, policy and politics—ruled the day. The result was an administration that found itself overtaken by events as, year to year, Obama struggled to grow into the world’s toughest job and, in desperation, take control of his own administration.

Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Ron Suskind introduces readers to an ensemble cast, from the titans of high finance to a new generation of reformers, from petulant congressmen and acerbic lobbyists to a tight circle of White House advisers—and, ultimately, to the president himself, as you’ve never before seen him. Based on hundreds of interviews and filled with piercing insights and startling disclosures, *Confidence Men* brings into focus the collusion and conflict between the nation’s two capitals—New York and Washington, one of private gain, the other of public purpose—in defining confidence and, thereby, charting America’s future.

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