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## America's Dystopian Future



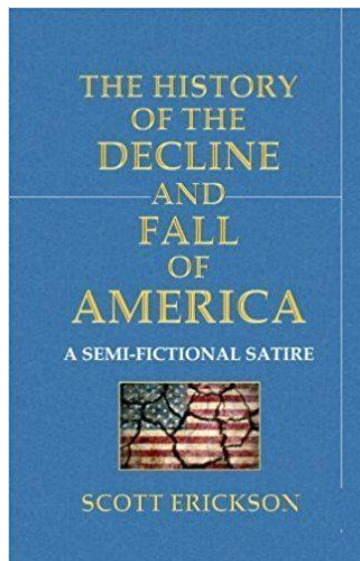
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Imagine a privatized America where rugged individualism reigns supreme within a vast network of corporate America, Inc., similar to 19th century wild west lifestyle, no social security, no Medicare, no Medicaid, no public law enforcement as individuals stand their

own ground. Read all about it in Scott Erickson's *[History of the Decline and Fall of America](#)* (Azaria Press, 2018).

Erickson's newly released semi-fictional satire of American history and subsequent decline into deepening pits of despair is a sure-fire treasure trove of Americana, at its best. It's a page-turner par excellence, rich in accurate textured American history and jam-packed with imagery of a dystopian future that is simply unavoidable based upon America's character and development over the past two centuries. The dye was cast long before onset of dystopian existence.

The History of the Decline and Fall of America highlights and exposes inherent limitations of democratic capitalism whilst explaining in full living color a future American dystopia that is fully expected based upon America's beginnings from the time of Captain John Smith at historic Jamestown (1607). The history lesson therein is superb, not missing a beat of what shaped America up to the final tipping point of neoliberal dogma and beyond into a deep dark world order.



This beautifully written and conceived historical fiction is a witty tour de force of America past, present, and future, weaving together all of the historical elements into one coherent story from the widely accepted version of American “business success ” of the early period, but over time wistfully morphing into abject failure!

That process of failure, the root causes, is what intrigues, for example, “Americans were not only inventing a country but inventing what it meant to be an American.” Indeed, America came into being as a brand new experiment in capitalistic democracy. Within that quest for a new way forward, inclusive of equality and fraternity amongst equals, Erickson

discovers and reveals unique American traits that belie that mission, leading to a neoliberal/privatization hellhole that goes horribly wrong.

That fascinating pathway is explained via enchanting quips, for example, de Tocqueville's remarkably astute comment: "I know of no country, indeed, where the love of money has taken a stronger hold on the affections of men." This one isolated statement from the 1830s tells a tale of American character molded by artificiality of wealth creation simply for the sake of possessing it. America's pursuit of happiness was the "pursuit of affluence" and remained its dominant trait for the "remaining 200-plus years of American history."

Indeed, those predominant American character traits are flushed-out and analyzed in the context of eventual failure, of a dystopian world order emanating out of America's clumsy experimentation with empire-building and constantly striving for the pot at the end of the rainbow, meaning economic growth above all else. It was a frontier spirit that fed into elusive goals of preeminence: "The frontier resulted in Americans being doers rather than thinkers...."

Real scenes of real American cocksuredness, as well as the clumsiness associated with raw ignorance, come to life, e.g., during the presidential race between Ike and Adlai Stevenson in 1954: "A revealing incident occurred while Stevenson was campaigning for president. A citizen shouted to Stevenson that he 'had the vote of every thinking person.' Stevenson replied, 'That's not enough. We need a majority!'" This is excellent history, comparable to a textbook, as well as a peek into the future shaped via trends rooted throughout Americana. Erickson's lessons in American history are genuine and accurate, which gives the book depth and a powerful sense of significance well beyond similar treatises that try to lay the challenging groundwork leading to how a nation turns sour into a dystopian society.

He weaves the path of Manifest Destiny all the way from 1840s to the planting of the American flag on the surface of the moon. Until the 1970s when American pre-eminence tipped downward, humiliated in Vietnam in what future generations came to know as "The Vietnam Syndrome," the psychological attempt to live with the unacceptable reality that it was possible for America to not win.

Not only was America no longer a winner in war, its "unparalleled level of affluence... began to decline." The 1970s marked the high point, forever downward into a bottomless septic tank, a cloaca of messy foul shit earmarking America's final destiny, third world status within a realm of excessive, pretense of wealth glistening behind spiked electronic gates.

The signs of decline were easy to spot by the early-mid 2000s: "... the situation had declined dramatically. According to statistics from 2015, among industrialized nations, America was notable for having the highest poverty rate, the lowest score on the UN index of 'material well-being of children,' the highest health care expenditures, the highest infant mortality rate, the highest prevalence of mental health problems, the highest obesity rate, the highest consumption of antidepressants per capita, the highest homicide rate, and the largest prison population per capita. By international standards, the rural counties of southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky qualified as developing countries, as did large sections of American cities such as Detroit, Cleveland, Gary, and many others." (Pg. 112)

Thereafter, America's youth no longer embraced the long-standing belief that they would have more than their parents. No, they knew it would be less and less. America entered a "permanent recession" cycle.

By the late 2030s American experienced a series of extreme crises. A number of cities declared bankruptcy. Houston, America's 4th largest city goes bankrupt. Cleveland goes bankrupt. The head of the Federal Reserve quits and becomes a banjo player in a bluegrass group. America's banking system collapses under the weight of fishy loans and massive crazed derivatives all permitted by increasingly hands-off regulations. The brutal hand of libertarianism smears a once proud republic.

Regular citizens, entire families carry torches surrounding Wall Street in protest of loss savings, ATMs not functioning, banks closed. An economic death spiral unleashed. The Save America Act followed, consisting of pure right wing neoliberal fix-its to save corporate America, to save Wall Street, turning to America, Inc. as the only answer to all that ails.

And, as the financial markets unravel in the face of nationwide bankruptcies, the government convincingly informs the public: "We need to defy the Constitution in order to preserve it... Americans were so thoroughly confused about the relationship between government and economics that most of them thought that the terms democracy, free-enterprise, and capitalism were the same thing." (Pg. 165)

As time progresses, America's Labor Day is changed to Management Day, and the Catholic Church is permitted to re-name the Statue of Liberty as "Our Lady of Perpetual Economic Growth." America the nation turns into America, Inc. It is the only way the establishment knows to drive the country out of its doldrums. As such, The Star Spangled Banner is changed to The Free Market Ramble.

Privatization of the entire country in harmony with massive tax cuts alongside elimination of Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, public education, law enforcement, postal service, and maintenance of roads and infrastructure, thereafter, people take care of themselves from birth to the death, alone with family backing. Self-directed medical care becomes a beacon of survival of the fittest of the fittest. Those that participated as youngsters in Boy/Girl Scouts have a leg up in a society that increasingly places emphasis on rugged individualism. However, the many, many weaklings stumble in rows after rows of slimy gutters.

In the end, and similar to America's 2008-09 financial collapse, which was only a warm up for much bigger things to come: "The decisive trigger, the one that pushed America beyond the point of no return, was the total collapse of the economy. It had been something of a miracle that the doomed economy had not collapsed long before. Toward the end it had been sustained by little more than momentum, since according to all economic indicators it should not have been functioning at all. The economic system based on infinite growth had reached the point where it could grow no more. American banks could not pay off previous debt by making further loans to generate more money. The pyramid scheme was over... An eerie calm descended upon all those involved in economics and finance."