

[PDF] American Sucker

David Denby - pdf download free book



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Author: David Denby
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Description:

From Publishers Weekly "I wanted to be wealthy," Denby bluntly admits near the end of this absorbing memoir of the dot-com boom and bust. "I didn't make it." Like millions of other amateur investors in 2000 and 2001, Denby (Great Books) was swept along by greed, by the nearly messianic belief that the stock market offered easy opportunities for unlimited prosperity. Denby sunk hundreds of thousands of dollars into the Nasdaq, digested unhealthy amounts of CNBC and the Wall Street Journal and forged friendships with some of the era's brightest stars (and, later, its most public criminals). He lost his balance in the excess of the time-stock tickers in strip clubs; parties at executives' lofts-and then lost his money when the market crashed. ("The ax had swung," Denby writes, "and heads lay all over the ground.") Though exceedingly well written, Denby's portrait of the

great "Dot Con" generally echoes the sentiments of other, similarly themed books about the period. The work is more appealing when Denby focuses on himself: he had nearly suffered a nervous breakdown when his wife of 18 years left him, and making enough money to buy out her share of their apartment was his initial motivation for investing in the market. Denby brutally details his decline, from a night of impotence to an affair with a married woman, then a six-month obsession with Internet porn-harrowing stuff for a New Yorker staff writer. His dissection of his own Upper West Side narcissism offers some of the most candid critiques of the Manhattan bourgeoisie ever found outside of a Woody Allen film. More of Denby, and less of the Nasdaq, would have made this good book even better.

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From "[N]obody really wants to read about his own foolishness," notes the *Wall Street Journal*. "Or write about it." Except Denby. How did this smart man (and author of *Great Books*) become a half-witted speculator? Denby, simultaneously whiny, pedantic, and giddy as befits the boom and bust cycle he recounts, charts his personal transformation. At best, *American Sucker* is an honest, well-written memoir about marriage, professional responsibility, and love and loss--even if his attempt to grapple with philosophers and put his journey into a larger framework fails. At worst, it's a meandering, journalistic piece that reveals Denby's everlasting belief in the American dream--a dream readers will be smart to question.

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