



Over the Cliff: How Obama's Election Drove the American Right Insane

John Amato , David Neiwert

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A witty look at Tea Parties and the reactionaries that is both funny and frightening. It explores how it overtook the conservative movement after Obama became president. The book helps readers make sense of the chaos in the media and offers ideas for bringing a stop to it and help make America sane again

Compiling example after example, the editors of Crooks and Liars, a popular blog, examine the torrent of right-wing kookery--the eager willingness of conservatives to fervently believe things that are provably false--and its ramifications both for our national discourse and our national well-being. The authors show how this outlandish, overheated rhetoric--generated by mainstream-media figures like Glenn Beck, Rush Limbaugh, and Lou Dobbs--is accompanied by a wave of lethal right-wing threats and violence. They carefully expose the bias of Fox News contributors Neil Cavuto, Greta, Van Susteren, et al, and political opportunists like Sarah Palin and Newt Gingrich.

The book explores the main drivers of this descent into madness: the extremist Radical Right and the longtime Republican willingness--dating back to Nixon, but refined in more recent years by Lee Atwater and his acolytes--to engage in a divisive politics of resentment, both racial and cultural.

It takes a critical look at how Tea Party provocateurs like Dick Armey and his Freedom Works organization that take huge contributions from big money interests like former presidential candidate Steve Forbes that are willing to turn a blind eye to bigots, birthers and neo-John Birchers. The book demonstrates how the Tea Party is the true face of the Republican Party.

The authors propose simple ways ordinary Americans can help stop the descent into blind opposition for its own sake. They suggest that news audiences demand accountability by from their sources by critically commenting on their Web site and to their editors or producers. They write "confronting the media malfeasance that makes rightwing populism possible is only an important first step in meeting the challenges posed by the rise of this political pathology in American life. Ultimately, it means confronting the movement and its leaders, particularly in their embrace of conspiracy theories, falsehoods, scapegoating, and vicious eliminationist rhetoric."

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Insane John Amato , David Neiwert**

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Beth says

Meh.

I was in the mood for a political book, and this fit the bill. What I found disappointing was that this merely rehashed the various media stories and so-called "journalism" from the likes of Glenn Beck, but really didn't delve into WHY the right freaked out over Obama's election.

This was published in 2010, and what I found heartening is that just four years later, Sarah Palin is no longer a political force and Glenn Beck no longer has a TV show. A nice reminder that what might seem threatening at one time often loses its fangs just a short time later.

Ladymidnight says

As a non-American it was interesting to get some background on the far right that has been so scarily in the news recently.

Wolfgang says

Short history of how America's conservatives lost their minds after Obama became president. Well written condensed account of all major wingnuttery. But all this is probably too fresh still, as it seemed quite redundant to read now while all this is still going on around us.

Donna says

For those who follow current events closely, there will be few surprises in *Over the Cliff*. The book reviews many of the events that have occurred in the two years since the inauguration of President Obama, placing them in the context of the history of conservative extremism in the United States. By documenting the scope and extent of the misinformation, fear tactics, and violent rhetoric employed by the Right—and the extent to which that radical right has become almost synonymous with the Republican Party—it does convey a real sense of urgency.

After describing “the conservative movement’s longtime embrace of the politics of resentment,” authors Amato and Neiwart advocate the need for ethical, progressive-minded citizens to be “called back to the fray, engaged anew, and empowered to take the nation down another road.”

Highly recommended for those deluded by the propaganda on hate-talk radio and Fox News, as well as those rightfully concerned about the actions of others who are.

Matthew says

In comparison with *American Taliban*, I think this book is just a tad bit better. It doesn't have the hampering factor of the unnecessary metaphor, and it's just as terrifying.

Michael says

As a Progressive, books like have a tendency to "preach to the choir." However, this did not stop me from enjoying this book. At times the text seemed to ramble across many subject matters, however, I am glad to see books like this available as a counterweight to trash written by people such as Glenn Beck, Bill O'Reilly, and Ann Coulter.

James says

This book is a good summary of the reaction of the right wing to the election of Obama and the collapse of the economy. It is a good introduction to these issues that provides a lot of avenues for further readings. However, I give it a 4 out of 5 instead of 5 because it could go deeper in its analysis and connection of issues and movements.

I strongly recommend Neiwarts other recent book, the *Eliminationists*, which looks at how extreme right wing hate and conspiracy ideology gets mainstreamed.

Leigh Anne Kincaid says

Crazy Book.. but fascinating.

Alaina says

I had completely forgotten how new the Tea Party, and Glenn Beck for that matter, is to American politics. They're so ubiquitous now, it's hard to remember when they weren't here. This book is a very good chronicle of their rise, something I'll look forward to reading many years from now when I know how the current right wing populist movement fared. My main quibble is that there are no footnotes/endnotes. The book appears to be very well-sourced; the authors could have done a slightly better job documenting those sources.

Kathleen Valentine says

This is an enlightening book on the effect the election of our first non-white President has manifested

unprecedented outrage in certain sectors of America. Specific examples are particularly interesting.

Javier Santillan says

Addictive reading, but depressing.

Archie says

Nothing surprising here but a pretty good summary of how the right-wing has worked tirelessly to de-legitimize Obama's presidency.

Harvey Chess says

The American Racist Right...

Patrick says

A slim (271 page) chronological history of the rise of lunatic fringe opposition to President Obama from 2008-2010. While its helpful as a history, it does nothing to answer the much bigger question of why people would gleefully take marching orders from such obviously unhinged charlatans as Glen Beck.

Marista says

This book started out great and summed up a lot of the information that was over the news pre and post inauguration. Towards the end, it just kind of carried on about the same stuff and I was ready for it to be over. I wish it would have been 50 pages shorter, then it would have been great.
