From the author of the landmark bestseller What’s the Matter with Kansas?, a jaw-dropping investigation of the decades of deliberate—and lucrative—conservative misrule.

In his previous book, Thomas Frank explained why working America votes for politicians who reserve their favors for the rich. Now, in The Wrecking Crew, Frank examines the blundering and corrupt Washington those politicians have given us.

Casting back to the early days of the conservative revolution, Frank describes the rise of a ruling coalition dedicated to dismantling government. But rather than cutting down the big government they claim to hate, conservatives have simply sold it off, deregulating some industries, defunding others, but always turning public policy into a private-sector bidding war. Washington itself has been remade into a golden landscape.
of super-wealthy suburbs and gleaming lobbyist headquarters—the wages of government-by-entrepreneurship practiced so outrageously by figures such as Jack Abramoff.

It is no coincidence, Frank argues, that the same politicians who guffaw at the idea of effective government have installed a regime in which incompetence is the rule. Nor will the country easily shake off the consequences of deliberate misgovernment through the usual election remedies. Obsessed with achieving a lasting victory, conservatives have taken pains to enshrine the free market as the permanent creed of state.

Stamped with Thomas Frank’s audacity, analytic brilliance, and wit, The Wrecking Crew is his most revelatory work yet—and his most important.

I am of the age, that I was actively involved in the PIRG on campus when I was in college. We were idealistic pushing for reform in public transportation and maybe some green issues. I dont remember details. Its AMAZING to realize that our little, leftist push to try to create a slightly better world, was being countered by the sycophantic madness of Jack Abramhoff and his American and South African corporate backers.

We were holding demonstrations to end apartheid, never thinking that our actions would generate massive corporate support to undermine our activities. And, yet, in hindsight, we kept wondering how these boneheads kept winning. Its easy to see. They were focused, greedy and willing to do what it takes to jump on the Reagan gravy train.

For those who didnt live through that era, there was a real sense that the Reaganomics train was leaving the station and youd better be on it, or your life was going to be ruined. Many of us thought a career in engineering or some other high paying field was the ticket to the promised land. But it turns out there was another whole game being played on a skewed playing field. My thinking at the time was, Well sure Im a liberal, but Im in engineering, so Ill do great.

Ha!

The issues that I have struggled with as an adult, have been those that have been ruined by the destruction of the federal goverment: the lousy education my children have received, the inequity in taxation and compensation that has seen the diminution of the middleclass, our attempt to keep up with the Jones through creditcard debt and home equity borrowing and the resulting divorce rate with disillusioned couples who see the neighbors moving into ever bigger McMansions and dont see that the game is rigged.
We laughed in 1984, and Oohed and Aahed at the Apple ad during the Super Bowl (the woman, with the hammer, with the screen, &c). What we didn't realize was that Orwells 1984 was taking place before our eyes and through the disingenuous misinformation of the conservative movement, we have been trumpeting our own demise ever since. The question now is, will the Orwellian nightmare continue for our children or can we rescue the Republic?

If, as some say, the Obama administration is our only chance to make a difference in our lifetimes: then we will fail. Liberals need to act now to return our country to a land governed by and for the people, instead of the corporations.

I think the author would approve if I ended my review with a quote from the only band that mattered:

The men at the factory are old and cunning
You dont owe nothing, boy get running
Its the best years of your life they want to steal

All these years we've been working for the clampdown. If you can read this book and come away with a different conclusion then I'm sorry, but you have been culturally lobotimized; you might as well have DITTO tattooed on your forehead.

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