

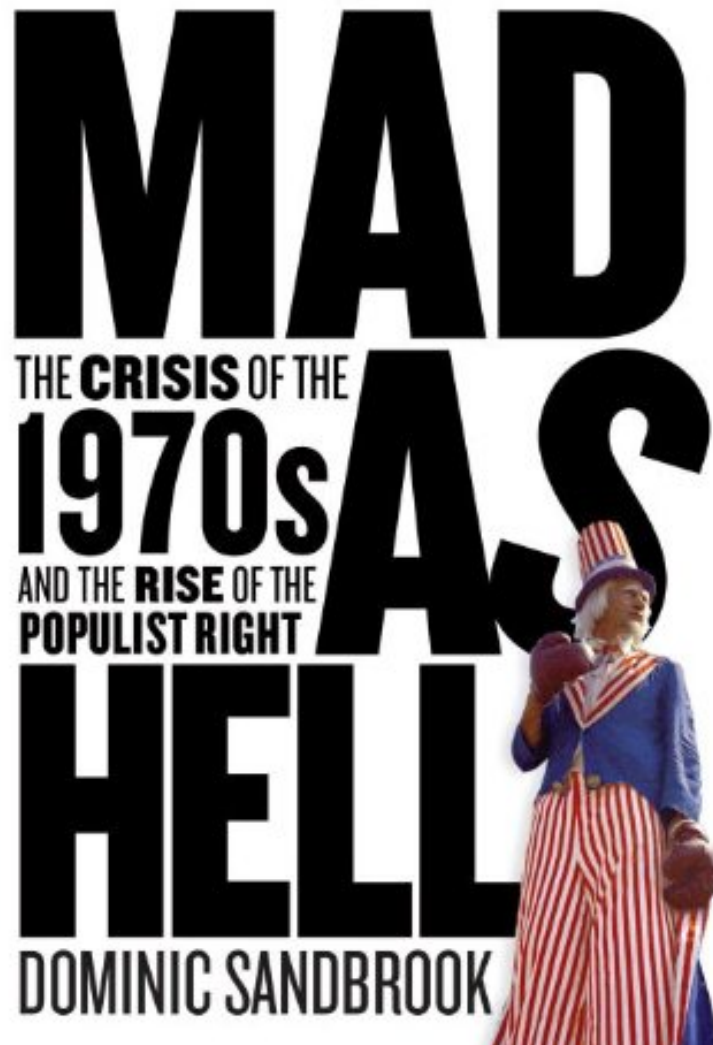
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Mad as Hell

Dominic Sandbrook

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"Frisky and intelligent. . . . Among the most readable histories of the 1970s I've come across."
—Dwight Garner, *The New York Times*



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Dominic Sandbrook : Mad as Hell before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Mad as Hell:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. 2010 = 1978 revisited? By Michael P. Adams Religious controversies; concerns about energy supplies; concerns about government spending; defeat in foreign wars; KKK invectives against "socialist n***ers". Sounds like today, more or less: except this was the post-Nixon period of the 1970s. This book interweaves the different movements of the day (anti-textbook riots; busing riots; anti-ERA campaigns); with assorted pop-culture references ("Network"; "Charlie's Angels"; Bruce Springsteen). It points out the

role of people still involved in today's politics: Cheney and Rumsfeld, as aides for President Ford; George Will's political punditry; Ted Koppel's reporting from Iran. It suggests the antitax sentiment of today, dates to a 1978 Republican-Populist uprising. It documents how people regarded Ford and Carter as clumsy; and the rise of the Reagan movement, and the introduction of "voodoo economics". This review can't do the book justice in the breath of what it tries to cover from the period.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. Where have we seen this before? By Jeff T. Dominic Sandbrook's incredibly insightful re-telling of the 1970s in American life is crucial to understand the current political, social, cultural situation in the United States. Sandbrook takes his readers through an entertaining romp through America's battles of the 1970s from Nixon against the Communists down to Anita Bryant attacks on gay Americans and everything else in between. In it, you will find the kernels of the current tea-party wing of the GOP and the merciless attacks withered against President Obama. All the GOP needs now is a hostage crisis in the Islamic World to attack Obama with, just like Jimmy Carter, a true outlier president, faced in '79. Uh oh, I kid you not, today, as I write this review, an American Ambassador was killed in Libya while anti-Americanism rages throughout both Libya and Egypt. Do not hesitate to pick up a copy of this intellectual tour de force.⁰ of 0 people found the following review helpful. A good book, but not a great one. By Ben Dominic Sandbrook did impress me with his knowledge of American culture and politics. Not bad for an Englishman. I surely couldn't write a similar tome about Britain in the same period. The book covers all sorts of cultural and political phenomena unique to the 1970s, including gas lines, Bruce Springsteen, the New South, the early affirmative action court decisions, All in the Family, and busing in South Boston. There was a little bit of liberal sneering toward those backwards conservatives (among which I count myself) but only a little. In most regards I think Sandbrook attempted to represent the populist right faithfully and without caricatures.

"Irsquo;m mad as hell, and Irsquo;m not going to take it anymore!" The words of Howard Beale, the fictional anchorman in the 1970s hit film *Network*, struck a chord with a generation of Americans. From the disgrace of Watergate to the humiliation of the Iran hostage crisis, the American Dream seemed to be falling apart. In this magisterial new history, Dominic Sandbrook re-creates the schizophrenic atmosphere of the 1970s, the world of Henry Kissinger and Edward Kennedy, Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell, Bruce Springsteen and Tom Landry. He takes us back to an age when feminists were on the march and the Communists seemed to be winning the Cold War, but also when a new kind of right-wing populism was transforming American politics from the ground up. Those years gave us organic food, disco music, gas lines, and gay rights—but they also gave us Proposition 13, the neoconservative movement, and the rise of Ronald Reagan. From the killing fields of Vietnam to the mean streets of Manhattan, this is a richly compelling picture of the turbulent age in which our modern-day populist politics was born. For those who remember the days when you could buy a new Ford Mustang II but had to wait hours to fill the tank, this could hardly be a more vivid book. And for those born later, it is the perfect guide to a tortured landscape that shaped our present, from the financial boardroom to the suburban bedroom: the extraordinary world of 1970s America. From the Hardcover edition.

From Publishers Weekly Inspired by the famous scene in *Network* in which TV watchers howl their inchoate rage, historian Sandbrook (Eugene McCarthy) offers a shrewd, sparkling politico-cultural history of post-Watergate America. Sandbrook locates the decade's heart in the popular distrust and subsequent resentment of all institutions-- governments, corporations, and unions. The individualism that results, Sandbrook argues, resonates with the roots of evangelicalism and develops into the beginnings of right-wing Christian populism. This fertile if not entirely original take on the era offers insightful interpretations of 1970s watersheds, from Jimmy Carter's canny "outsider" presidential campaign to property-tax revolts and battles over school busing and the ERA. Sandbrook sets his chronicle against a panorama of gasoline lines, stagflation, and epochal changes in race relations, women's roles, and sexual mores, woven together with cultural touchstones from Bruce Springsteen to *Charlie's Angels*. Sandbrook's account of right-wing populism as a mass phenomenon, fed by real grievances over social and economic turmoil and a pervasive sense of decline, largely misses the role of business interests; still, his subtle, well-written narrative of wrathful little guys confronting a faltering establishment illuminates a crucial aspect of a time much like our own. Photos. (Feb.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved. From Booklist British commentator Sandbrook comes to much the same conclusion about 1970s America that countryman Francis Wheen reached in *Strange Days Indeed* (2010); namely, that a spirit of discontent, even paranoia, pervaded the U.S. throughout the decade. Starting with Richard Nixon's resignation in 1974, all the touchstones of the period are detailed: America's humiliating defeat in Vietnam, an uptick in serious crime, economic malaise, rising fuel costs, environmental degradation, the Iranian hostage crisis, and an overall breakdown in respect for institutions, among others. But unlike Wheen, who's content enough to state his case, Sandbrook lays out just how this discontent found its expression in the emergence of Ronald Reagan and the Republican Right by the decade's end. Not an easy book to work through, but readers will be rewarded for their effort. --Alan Moore "As historians go, [Sandbrook] is a Hugh Grant-level charmer. . . . Mad as Hell is frisky and intelligent; it's among the most readable histories of the 1970s we've come across." —Dwight

Garner, *The New York Times* "Mad as Hell" is an entertaining yet substantial book about a wince-inducing era. When it comes to the Seventies, Sandbrook knows the way we were, even if we wish we hadn't been."—Chris Tucker, *Dallas Morning News* "A terrific read . . . Sandbrook brings the 1970s back to vivid life in *Mad as Hell*, his entertaining, opinionated take on the politics, economics, and cultural signifiers of a decade he views as the incubator of today's right wing . . . Packed with anecdote and insight."—Carlo Wolff, *Christian Science Monitor* "First-rate . . . [Sandbrook] is able to view history panoramically, almost as a living, breathing organism, by collecting and effectively using vast numbers of on-the-ground anecdotes. When it comes time for a future Edward Gibbon to explore the decline and fall of the American Republic, it is quite possible that he or she will zero in on the cultural trends and economic upheavals of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. If that is the case, *Mad as Hell* will be there as a guiding light."—Sasha Abramsky, *Columbia Journalism* "A shrewd, sparkling politico-cultural history of post-Watergate America . . . [Sandbrook's] subtle, well-written narrative of wrathful little guys confronting a faltering establishment illuminates a crucial aspect of a time much like our own."—*Publishers Weekly* "Starting with Richard Nixon's resignation in 1974, all the touchstones of the period are detailed . . . Sandbrook lays out just how this discontent found it..."