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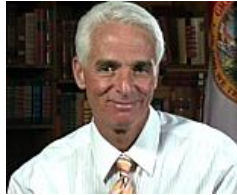
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The Rise and Fall of Detroit

By [Mario Loyola](#)

July 21, 2013 7:40 PM

Comments 137

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It is really amazing to behold the persistence of the Left's economic narratives. In every case where government interferes with a market to create cartels, misallocations of resources, and stifling fiscal burdens, the resulting social losses get blamed on . . . the market! And the solution is . . . more government interference! And no matter how often you disprove the narrative, it comes back, again and again.

Back in 2011, I wrote [a feature for NR](#) comparing the history of Detroit and Houston over the last century. The Left's narrative now has it that the market favored Houston (oil) and not Detroit (cars). That totally ignores the acute oil glut of the 1980s, which sent Texas and Houston into a regional depression. The companies in Houston cried out for protection — but instead of getting government help, they were allowed to go into bankruptcy. As a result, I wrote, Houston “bounced back as if suspended from a bungee cord — even though the oil bust lasted nearly two decades.” Houston followed the conservative vision of

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government, which is to get the government off the people's back and let them find their own way to prosperity. From my article:

Detroit, conversely, is proof of concept for the liberal vision of government, which seeks to solve every problem through government, to shape economic development through government, to redress grievances through government, to attain social justice through government, and, finally, to insinuate government into every aspect of our lives. The problems Detroit faced in the latter half of the 20th century would have been enormously challenging no matter what policies it embraced. But it embraced the worst ones and so plunged recklessly down the slope of decline.

Each city has offered a nearly pure exposition of a particular philosophy of government and a vivid demonstration of the results. In the degree of collusion between business and government, in the power of labor unions, in the method of economic development, in the burden of taxation and regulation, in the tolerance for diversity — in all these ways and more, the two cities stand as diametric opposites in the choices a society can make.

The cause of Detroit's epic fall from grandeur is not the market, but government interference in the market — from crony capitalism to labor-union laws to welfare. Don't let E. J. Dionne's [silly myths](#) detain you for a second. In the case of Detroit, what government policies have done amounts to a crime against humanity.

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by Taboola



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barthomew · 19 hours ago

Liberal New York Times columnist and Texas native Molly Ivins once compared the response of Texas to an economic crisis with the response of California to an economic crisis around the same times. She praised Texas for not moping and begging, but rather gritting its teeth as oil prices plummeted and stayed there. She praised the continued graciousness of Texas during that crisis towards immigrants and Hispanics. She contrasted that with how California blamed the immigrants and Hispanics for their own California crisis, with Governor Pete Wilson even trying to ride California's legal and propositional effort against immigrants to the Presidency, starting with announcing his campaign at what he tried to highjack as a symbol, the Statue of Liberty. She noted the long Texas hospitality towards immigrants and Hispanics, in contrast to spurts of California hostility. Note also how during the Clinton administration there was a commission to close military bases; decisions were supposed to be final. But California found a way around the commission; and that sabotaged any such future commission.

^ | ▾ Reply Share >



123MarkW · a day ago

Liberals are so convinced of their own superiority, that they honestly believe that they can solve any problem, if only they could be given enough power.

1 ^ | ▾ Reply Share >



fondatorey · a day ago

I'm sorry but the whole 'respectable' conservative idea that 'liberal government destroyed Detroit' is just silly. Just about every big northern city is similarly corrupt and has similar crony capitalist features. Sure these perversions are 'explained' by their beneficiaries using liberal phrases (which are just the phrases that make sense to the media and powerful rich in America) but we are really talking about insiders taking advantage which is part of universal human nature not liberalism per se. The real Detroit story is that blacks, by violence, ethnically cleansed the city of middle class white people, and it is impossible to maintain a first world city with third-world levels of productivity even considering the high levels of government and corporate aid that has been given to motown over the years..

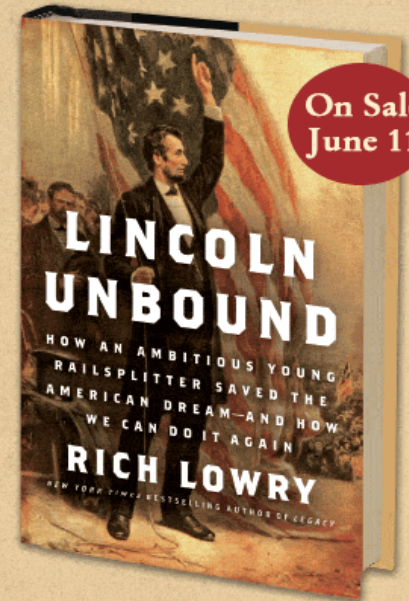
1 ^ | 1 ▾ Reply Share >



Harrison Mack · a day ago

What Detroit could really use is a charismatic leader like that guy Jones, and a really large vat of Kool Aid.

New from *National Review*
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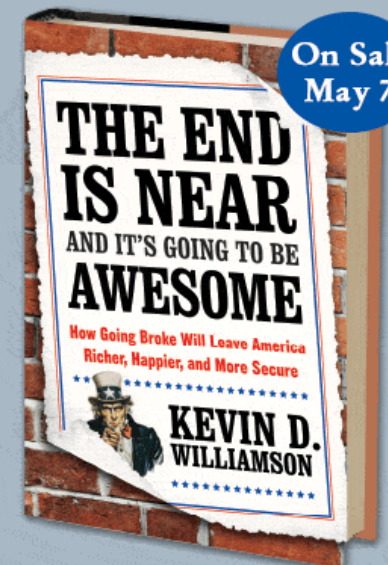
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On Sale
May 7

Praise for Kevin Williamson:

“Required reading.”

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1 ^ | 1 v Reply Share >



Tom → Harrison Mack · a day ago

I hadn't realized that Jim Jones was actually a big deal in San Francisco politics until I read up on it.

1 ^ | v Reply Share >



sueque · a day ago

First of all, the auto industry is alive and well in the South. That's for all you South bashers here. Read it and weep. The facts suggest that something about Detroit specifically has caused its problems as far as the auto industry is concerned, Anyone care to guess what that is?

<http://www.southernautocorrido...>

Now, Detroit's problems are a result of betting on an unsustainable future, that consisted of paying for Union benefits (public and industry) on a failing business model, Ever increasing obligations entered into by the auto companies that presupposed the industry would be able to sustain increasing labor costs, the city would be able to rely on a stable tax base, and the whole thing would not collapse of its own weight. The auto industry execs bet on a continuing demand for the product now matter how costly and the city bet on being able to fund corruption, non delivery of services, overloaded with costs, and demands.

Now we will go to the part where I say history is what I remember, not what I read. Years ago the industry made what it wanted to make, large, unreliable product (but with fins. fins. fins. ever bigger ever more useless). The market

[see more](#)

2 ^ | v Reply Share >



Tom → sueque · a day ago

Good point. SOMEBODY is succeeding by manufacturing cars.

^ | v Reply Share >



schrifty · a day ago

> The cause of Detroit's epic fall from grandeur is not the market, but government interference in the market

Well, it's the market too. Lots and lots of bad decisions made in board rooms that had nothing to do with government at all. When you oversimplify a story this much, you undercut your own point - I don't think that a lack of government interference/help would have saved Detroit for a minute.

2 ^ | 5 v Reply Share >



123MarkW → schrifty · a day ago

Since nobody's perfect, bad decisions are made in board rooms all across the world every single day.

The question is why did those bad decisions result in the death of an industry and a city in this case, but not in all the others.

1 ^ | v Reply Share >



Harrison Mack → schrifty · a day ago

And yet somehow, the auto industry thrives in the American south and all over the world.

Everywhere the stinking UAW has not soiled the landscape.

4 ^ | v Reply Share >



Ashley Carrier → schrifty · a day ago

And I suppose things like government interference such as the CARE fuel efficiency mandates had little to do with influencing some of those bad decisions in the boardroom? I'd say those have a role. Another bad decision? Continuing to hand out these gold-plated pension plans even


GATESTONE
INSTITUTE

JULY 11, 2013

“A court in London has sentenced seven members of a Muslim ‘child grooming’ gang based in Oxford to at least 95 years in prison for raping, torturing and trafficking British girls as young as 11.”

FROM ‘Rape Jihad’ Against British Children

BY Soeren Kern

CLICK HERE TO READ

after it became clear that competition from foreign cars was going to make that unsustainable. But management and labor bear responsibility for that.

3 ^ | v Reply Share >



Tom → Ashley Carrier · a day ago

That'd be CAFE standards.

^ | v Reply Share >



Cimon Alexander · a day ago

It's worth noting that there are very different demographics in both places. If Houston had the illiteracy rate of Detroit, could it bounce back from adversity? Swap the people of Houston and Detroit, except for the government, and what would happen?

1 ^ | v Reply Share >



Emily → Cimon Alexander · a day ago

Illiteracy is not something that happens like tornadoes or a water crisis. It's entirely man-made.

4 ^ | v Reply Share >



Harrison Mack → Emily · a day ago

You said it! Fact is, any person who wants to read can learn to read. It ain't rocket surgery.

3 ^ | v Reply Share >



123MarkW → Harrison Mack · a day ago

If a 4 year old can learn to read, anyone can.

^ | v Reply Share >



Griffonn → Cimon Alexander · a day ago

Houston has better schools - especially if you separate and measure by demographics.

Detroit illiteracy is part of Detroit mismanagement.

5 ^ | v Reply Share >



Flamingo Phil · a day ago

Now look everyone, there is nothing wrong with the liberal model of governing, and it would have worked wonders for Detroit; the only problem was that they just didn't spend enough money....

7 ^ | v Reply Share >



Griffonn → Flamingo Phil · a day ago

I blame George W. Bush.

5 ^ | v Reply Share >



Harrison Mack → Griffonn · a day ago

Bingo! There is considerable proof, starting with photo documentation of Bush riding in Detroit-manufactured vehicles.

I mean, how obvious can it get?

1 ^ | v Reply Share >



Rinson Drei · a day ago

The South suffered from over 150 years of solid, banana-republic-like Democrat rule. What did we get for it? Every State a stagnant backwater, figuratively and literally. Blacks who could fled North to where the jobs and opportunity for betterment were.

Now that the Democrat yoke has been broken off our backs, and real political competition can occur at state and local levels, what do we get? Constant, steady growth, and improvement in most every measure. Blacks who can are now

returning South to their families' land, fleeing the stagnation and death solid Democrat rule has brought the factory towns up North. And we're thrilled to have them! They come with long and fond memories of life here, and without Democrats to keep them down, they are free to prosper.

5 ^ | v Reply Share >



This comment was deleted.



Cartoon Peril → tomas · a day ago

We don't need no stinkin' Voting Rights Act!

2 ^ | 6 v Reply Share >



des111168 → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

No. We don't.

^ | v Reply Share >



Harrison Mack → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

Well, we certainly didn't need one particularly stinking section of it, according to your heroic Justices.

3 ^ | 1 v Reply Share >



tomas → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

The Voting Rights Act is a great liberal achievement of which all Americans are proud. Made possible by MLK and other liberal civil rights leaders peacefully fighting Jim Crow in the south.

1 ^ | 4 v Reply Share >



This comment was deleted.



Harrison Mack → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

That's disgusting.

My great-great-grandad William would have offered at least \$100.

2 ^ | v Reply Share >



Cartoon Peril → Harrison Mack · a day ago

Rewards went up in nominal value after 1860 due to the splendid economic planning of the Confederate government.

^ | v Reply Share >



Emily → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

Democrats in charge, if I recall correctly.

8 ^ | v Reply Share >



Cartoon Peril → Emily · a day ago

Were Democrats in charge of the National Review in 1957 when they published this:

The central question that emerges — and it is not a parliamentary question or a question that is answered by merely consulting a catalog of the rights of American citizens, born Equal — is whether the White community in the South is entitled to take such measures as are necessary to prevail, politically and culturally, in areas in which it does not predominate numerically? The sobering answer is Yes — the White community is so entitled because, for the time being, it is the advanced race ...

1 ^ | 5 v Reply Share >



Sherman Logan → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

Mr. Buckley, and conservatism in general, were wrong when they took this position, which they abandoned and explicitly renounced decades ago.

I'm still waiting for liberals to renounce their equally wrong doctrine of statist government as the solution to every problem, even the invented ones.

5 ^ | v Reply Share >



Emily → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

Seriously? You countered hundreds of years of slavery followed by decades of brutal intimidation with a quote?

4 ^ | v Reply Share >



Emily → Emily · a day ago

An unattributed quote, as well...

3 ^ | v Reply Share >



Cartoon Peril → Emily · a day ago

The google is your friend: <http://www.google.com/search?c...>

^ | 4 v Reply Share >



Harrison Mack → Cartoon Peril · a day ago

The google appears to be your life!

You know nothing, google everything, discern nothing.

You seem to imagine you're the only person in the world with access to search engines.

4 ^ | v Reply Share >



Colonel Travis → Emily · a day ago

A century later they were still in charge and brought out Massive Resistance.

4 ^ | v Reply Share >



Winston · 2 days ago

It's worth adding that ideology does matter. Imagine NYC had it continued under Dinkins and all the excuses about "the ungovernable city."

9 ^ | v Reply Share >



davideisenstadt → Winston · 17 hours ago

but thats only the fourth city...and it failed under democrats and succeeded under republican rule... facts, only facts...

^ | v Reply Share >



Harrison Mack → Winston · a day ago

No need to imagine, Hollywood's done it for us.

Escape from New York, for example.

2 ^ | v Reply Share >



Winston · 2 days ago

Ideology is indestructible. Riots. Malfeasance. A long term mayor hostile to business and the police and white people in general. And unsustainable debts based on massive pension funds. How that translates into "the conservatives did it" is mind-blowing but predictable.

7 ^ | v Reply Share >



Emily · 2 days ago

Unions have one goal, and one goal only: Protect the interests of the members.

An individual fireman might be about keeping his city safe, but the union is about his job--making as much as possible and providing as many jobs as possible.

An individual teacher might be about teaching, but her union is about her job. Next time the NEA starts blathering about education, remember that these are the people who fight to keep abusive or substandard teachers employed. That's what the teachers pay their dues for.

It is not the goal of the union to keep the city thriving and healthy. This is not their job. This is not what the members pay their dues for. The taxpayers are not their concern.

4 ^ | v Reply Share >



Rinson Drei → Emily · a day ago

"Protect the interests of the members" - but not as the members see their interests, but as the union bosses do.

4 ^ | v Reply Share >



Emily → Rinson Drei · a day ago

Yes, so that as the schools go downhill, parents will pull their children out and find alternatives, leading to a smaller "client" base, which is offset by the fact that the exorbitant PERS obligations are leading to teachers being fired anyway.

2 ^ | v Reply Share >



gedaliya · 2 days ago

The fact is Detroit's destruction was caused by only one factor, and that is white flight. In 1960, when Detroit's population was about 1.8 million, blacks comprised about 28% of the population. After the riot of 1967, the debacle of the Coleman Young administration, and the crack-wars of the 1980s, the white population dwindled to 25%, and today it is about 10%. I don't believe such a thing has ever happened in any other major industrial city in the nation, or perhaps in any city of any kind. The resulting catastrophe is a thing to behold in itself.

3 ^ | 2 v Reply Share >



Harrison Mack → gedaliya · a day ago

And the white flight happened spontaneously, at random, for no reason whatsoever? That's when Detroit's history began?

2 ^ | v Reply Share >



Griffonn → gedaliya · a day ago

1) White flight wasn't the only factor. Not by a long shot.

2) When you can't talk about the fact that your next door neighbor is doing something that you find highly objectionable because the perpetrator has a particular skin color, then "white flight" becomes inevitable, and the word "racism" no longer means what it used to mean.

3) If your mayor wages war on people based on their skin color, those people are not going to stick around to be abused. DUH.

6 ^ | v Reply Share >



tomas · 2 days ago

New York City, San Francisco, Austin, Boston, Seattle, Portland, Washington DC, Iowa City, Madison, Lawrence, Durham, Olympia, Key West and most college towns are thriving and liberal.

4 ^ | 10 v Reply Share >



des111168 → tomas · a day ago

And every single one of them save one has one thing in common: rich,

white, affluent liberals dominating the town. DC is rich because it's the capital. with a pork slush fund making it a boomtown, but outside of the government district, it's Detroit without the prairie.

The thing about white liberals is that while they preach liberalism, they tend to live like conservatives: they get educated, they get good jobs, they get married and have kids. That's all the explanation you need for the success of those cities.

^ | v Reply Share ›



melscul → des111168 · a day ago

The cities listed in the comment were Chicago, Boston, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and San Francisco. A few of those cities are not dominated by rich, white liberals.

^ | v Reply Share ›

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