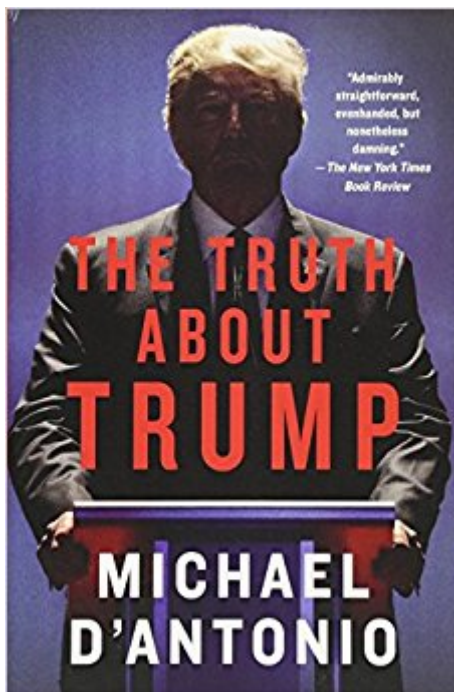


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# The Truth About Trump



## Synopsis

For all those who wonder, "Just who is Donald Trump?", *The Truth About Trump* supplies the answer. Drawing upon exclusive interviews and exhaustive research, Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter Michael D'Antonio presents Trump's full story, from his beginnings as a businessman to his juggernaut presidential campaign. Along the way, D'Antonio charts the successes and failures, scandals and triumphs, and relentless pursuit of money and fame that have made Trump who he is today. D'Antonio also details the origins of the Trump family fortune, Trump's history of using politics to get ahead, and how he has mastered the media to turn publicity into power. First published in 2015, and now updated to cover Trump's rise to political prominence, *The Truth About Trump* is an unsparing, eye-opening account of the life and career of the most talked-about man in America. "A carefully reported and fair-minded account." —*USA Today* "A brisk and entertaining read, drawing on interviews and documents and distilling decades' worth of news coverage to tell the story of Trump's childhood, family, business deals, and political forays." —*The Washington Post* "Balanced, well sourced, and perfectly timed." —*Financial Times* (UK)

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## Customer Reviews

"Never Enough is an admirably straight-forward, evenhanded but nonetheless damning account of Trump's life." —*The New York Times Book Review* "A brisk and entertaining read, drawing on interviews and documents and distilling decades' worth of news coverage to tell the story of Trump's childhood, family, business deals, and political forays." —*The Washington Post*

worth of news coverage to tell the story of Trump's childhood, family, business deals and political forays. The Washington Post "A carefully reported and fair-minded account. [David Mervin] has pulled together Trump's story, subjected it to some fact-checking and dissected a string of business deals that display his drive to win, his thirst for money, his willingness to push boundaries and his apparently endless quest for publicity. USA Today "Delightful." London Review of Books "Balanced, well-sourced and perfectly timed." The Financial Times

As part of a team of journalists from Newsday, Michael D'Antonio won the Pulitzer Prize for his reporting before going on to write many acclaimed books, including *Mortal Sins*. He has also written for publications such as *Esquire*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *The New York Times Magazine*.

Before the 2016 elections in the US, this reviewer paid little attention to this candidate (or to any aspects of Mr. Trump's life before that for that matter). After all, just about all the major polling and news organizations called the election for Ms. Clinton by a wide margin (albeit that margin varied quite a bit – the NY Times for month before the election believed that she had an 85% chance of winning while the more prosaic Gallop had the odds at a little less than 60%). Yet he won. Hence this reader felt the need to catch up and find out who this man is. What better way than reading a serious book by the Pulitzer Prize winning biographer Michael D'Antonio. This book, in short, does a pretty good but not spectacular job at providing a biography of the man (3.5-4 stars as opposed to 5). The book starts off with this grandfather's immigration to America and his entrepreneurial adventures. Then it moves on to his father and his business ventures. He made his name and fortune in the NY real estate business, specifically catering to middle class renters in Queens. He taught his son all he knew about the real estate business. In addition, he seems to have instilled a killer instinct into his son. Mr. D'Antonio follows the son's life from his childhood days and his schooling at the brutal military school where he was educated it (and the author does show how the word brutal was no exaggeration). This seems to have played a very important role in giving him the personality he has today (i.e., savage, no rules barred, winner takes all attitude, always pushing the boundaries to get what he wants, etc.). The author, however, does not interview too many of his instructors and fellow classmates (or if he did, does not do mention the results in too much detail). That is one of the big problems of this book. This is very much the opposite of David

Remick's *The Bridge: The Life and Rise of Barack Obama*. In that book Mr. Remick did a meticulous job at interviewing (and presenting to his readers the results of those interviews) a very large number of people who knew Mr. Obama personally in an attempt to figure out who Obama *the man* was (ironically that author fails at that task just like Mr. Antonio does *more* on that below). Mr. Antonio should have done a far better job at interviewing more people who knew Mr. Trump personally and presenting those interviews to the reader with the goal of using their knowledge of Mr. Trump to help the reader figure out who Mr. Trump *the man* is. The book then follows Trump through the rest of his life until his run for the White House. The reader learns of many of Mr. Trump's personality quirks and traits (i.e., always attacks those that criticize him, a distorted sense of truth, boundless narcissism, loyalty to those who were loyal to him [a characteristic in Trump's early life that Mr. Antonio does not look at in Trump's later life], etc.). Although the identification of these traits gives us an important picture of his personality the reader is still not presented with a picture of who Mr. Trump *the man* really is. With respect to an overview of who *the man* is Mr. Antonio, like so many, is simply stumped. He even admits as much. On p.335 of the paperback he writes *"Anyone who tried to grasp the real Trump was likely to fail. As the Gossip columnist Liz Smith tells me, 'I've known him forever, and can't figure him out.'* Even his first two wives expressed this exact same view to Mr. Antonio. In short, a book that provides us a decent picture of many aspects of Mr. Trump's personality but that is unable to get at the heart of who the subject really is. Perhaps Mr. Trump himself does not even know himself. Considering Mr. Trump's disdain for education, learning and self-reflection is it really a surprise that he has utterly ignored Socrates' very important maxim *"know thyself"*? Could it be, as Mr. Antonio concludes in the final page of the book, that in this age of Facebook, Twitter and other forms of narcissism run amuck, that Mr. Trump has only reflected society albeit in an excessive and *"first adapter"* manner? Could this be the core reason for his success? Addendum: for those interested in an investigative reporter's perspective on Mr. Trump this reviewer recommends David Kay Johnson's "The Making of Donald Trump". Being an investigative reporter Mr. Johnson does not attempt to analyze Mr.

Trump's personality or character but instead looks at him from viewpoint, in Fitzgerald's words, "action is character". A good compliment for to this book. This reviewer has also written a review of that book for interested in that book as well.

If you want to understand why Trump acts like he does read this book. It explains why he will never want to help anyone but himself and his family. His only goal in life is making money.

Great book! Just full of facts and reveals the true dishonest nature of Donald Trump.

"For the most part you can't respect people because most people are not worthy of respect" - Donald J. Trump (from the author's interviews with Trump in the book's postscript). That quote alone sums up why I can neither vote for Trump nor understand why others are so enthusiastic about him. The title of the book sums it up well. Trump gets bored with his buildings, his toys, and his wives, and moves on to more. If he sells at a loss in moving on, so be it. He takes risks by taking on massive loans from multiple banks, leaning on politicians to give his properties favor, and cajoling or charming people to make the deal. D'Antonio paints him as someone who would have been comfortable among the "Gilded Age" barons of the 19th century, making names for themselves in New York City. He loves the spotlight, being called "the best," and the media seems to love giving it to him. It's about himself; he is supremely worthy of respect and no one else is worthy of praise unless they first--and consistently--praise him. Why else are his offices filled with framed pictures of every magazine cover he has ever been on? Why else does he use an election-night victory speech to hock Trump-label water, steaks, etc? I would not have read this book if I had not felt it was imperative to understand more about who might be the next President. I call it the "Mein Kampf rule," you need to take a leader at his word and not be surprised later when his policies match up with all of his previous history and writings. Don't let the negative reviews deceive you, this book is about as even-handed a biography you will read-- it is straight-up boring in that regard. Much of it is simply culled from publicly-available information along with a few granted interviews with former Trump partners, a chauffeur, and even ex-wives. Trump gave the author a series of interviews until he discovered D'Antonio had spoken with someone who had wronged Trump back in 1993, in which case Trump ended the interviews. You have to admire D'Antonio's courage, Trump's last biographer was sued by the Donald for millions, only to have a court decide in favor of the First Amendment. Where the author presents facts that are on their face unpleasant, he tries to rationalize Trump's decisions or behaviors; bending over backward at times to be "fair." The book is depressing in that

there are a lot of events from Trump's past that have been under-scrutinized by the media and Trump's political opponents. It's almost as if Americans don't bother to read about the people they're voting for...What I did not realize before this book were the essentially faux political campaigns Donald has run since 1987. Politico didn't run with this story until February, 2016. Donald gave a well-attended Rotary Club speech then railing about how Japan was "killing us" in trade, and "laughing at us" in foreign policy the identical soundbyte he uses today. He spoke about we needed a strong leader in the White House to stand up to the Ayatollah in Iran, someone who really knew how to negotiate. (And this is when St. Ronald Reagan was at his nadir.) "If the right man doesn't get into office you're going to see a catastrophe in this country in the next four years like you're never going to believe. And then you'll be begging for the right man." He took out a full-page ad in several newspapers arguing that other countries should pay for the protection and benefits we offer as allies, similar to his argument about the Mexican wall. All of this was part of a larger promotional campaign for his new book-- The Art of the Deal. Trump actually did run briefly as a candidate in 1999 when he and others joined the Reform Party; Trump said Oprah Winfrey would be an ideal running mate and probably set forth more substantive policy ideas than he has thus far in his 2015-2016 run. Wealth tax on the rich, gays in the military, and other un-conservative ideas. Trump gave a speech in St. Louis probably almost as well-attended as his rally there in 2016, but it was part of a speaking tour of motivational speakers like Tony Robbins. Same stump speech, same script about weakness in foreign policy and trade. Al Gore allegedly asked for his endorsement later. Like 1987, 1999 was another way to promote a book-- The America We Deserve. D'Antonio has made that chapter available online here, I recommend reading so you can see how little has changed in 16 years: (It also contains the only explicit error I noticed in the book, that Dick Vermiel was coach of the St. Louis Cardinals rather than the Rams.) This book is lengthier than you might expect because the author has written it for audiences 30 years from now as well as today. He explains what reality television is, the history of real estate and fiscal crises in New York City in the 1960s and 1970s, what Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous was, etc. in order to provide context for Trump's decisions and fame. The conclusion I think D'Antonio wants you to draw is that Trump is simply a product of his time. Here's a summary: Donald J. Trump is the grandson of German immigrants. His grandfather, Friederick Trumpf, initially joined the gold rush and dabbled in real estate speculation and opened a restaurant/brothel before returning to Germany and being expelled for tax and military service evasion. Back in New York, he began the family's interest in real estate. Donald's father, Fred, became a real estate magnate in Brooklyn and Queens; one of Donald's first

jobs was to collect rent in his father's apartment blocks in Brooklyn. D'Antonio implies that the elder Trump was also a product of the Dale Carnegie 1920's era of salesmanship, traits that his children would later develop in their own generation. Fred Trump's big break came in entering a partnership with another magnate which positioned him to learn which tenants were delinquent and likely to be foreclosed on; this allowed him to buy up those properties cheaply and start his own empire. Complaints abounded about many landlords of the period, and Fred was no exception. What I did not realize was that Trump testified before the U.S. Senate Banking Committee in 1954 investigating how builders were enriching themselves off of FHA loans. President Eisenhower expressed his disgust at Trump and his ilk; the trial got less attention than it might have due to the McCarthy anti-Communist hearings happening at the same time. Trump was later sued by his tenants for his practices. Eventually, President Nixon's Justice Department sued Trump over racial discrimination in its renting policies. Trump consented to advertise vacancies in minority publications, and be more transparent about his practices. It was around this time that Donald J. came on board the family business. Another striking quote from Donald is that when he looks in the mirror he is the same person he was in first grade. He means it as a form of authenticity, but it strikes me as a lack of personal development. He was sent to military school by 7th grade, in which tough love from drill instructors was combined with boys running amok with hazing and mob rule. Donald apparently experienced success in athletics, often referring to his abilities later in life. Despite this athletic skill, he received a medical deferment from the draft for his heel spurs. By 1980, Trump was seen as sort of a Gatsby character in New York magazines; he was once named a Sexiest Man Alive. He turned his father's loan and connections from his father's business, particularly lawyer Don Cohn, into his own real estate success. D'Antonio interviews Trump's former chauffeur, an ex-cop who speaks glowingly of Trump's loyalty and personal kindness. "He was a nice, considerate guy." Ivana, meanwhile, is a mystery. She claims to be a Swiss olympian, but no record of athletic exploits or even her national origins exist-- only rumors. Trump's wealth is also mystery and rumor; at any time he has leveraged so much in debt that he admits to friends that his net worth is close to zero. He rails at Forbes and others when they make similar claims. It was in the 1980s days of Savings & Loan scandals and Wall Street excess that Trump honed his crafts-- self-promotion and negotiation. Trump negotiates by staking out an outlandish or unreasonable position and then negotiating backwards to what he really wants. The author chronicles the construction of Trump Towers and the hiring of undocumented Polish workers. The local union, paid multiples of the Poles' earnings, supervised the workers who are sometimes paid sometimes not paid sometimes paid with vodka or threatened with deportation-- there was no shortage of supply.

The building Trump demolished contained an Art Deco exterior that Trump pledged to donate to a museum, but were later destroyed-- possibly by accident. Trump invented the name of a media spokesman to make official statements to the press denying fault or assigning blame. The book has to delve into the real estate and construction markets of New York to make sense; this gets boring. Contracts for things like concrete have to be run through the mafia, and Trump has to navigate city hall as well as crime syndicates to get real estate deals done. Trump Tower housed celebrities, which put Donald Trump in their midst and he increasingly became one himself, being featured on Robin Leach's show. There is little in the book about his personal family relationships, Donald doesn't talk about much and little is known other than what his ex-wives divulge or was picked up by other writers. His brother died as an alcoholic at age 42, something that apparently affects Trump's moderation in certain vices today. His friend, lawyer, and mentor Roy Cohn, a closeted homosexual, died of AIDS not long after. Most of Trump's friends in the book are currently deceased. Marla Maples apparently still speaks well of Donald, even after admitting their relationship was an ill-fated mistake. Her years-long seduction and the divorce settlement with Ivana-- in which Donald could not afford to pay the committed pre-nuptial, which was updated and changed over the marriage-- is chronicled in detail. The Maples affair and Donald's business troubles with airlines and casinos eventually lead to tabloids taking a less-rosy view of Trump, to which he lashes out in his second book. Trump likes celebrity, but he doesn't like to be criticized as celebrities always are; he can dish it but he can't take it. Trump and his lawyer-mentor Roy Cohn were always actively engaged in local politics from regulations to police. One of Trump's nemeses was three-time mayor Ed Koch. Trump would get vocal and take out full-page ads, write editorials, and others in New York newspapers when he felt the need to trumpet his successes or properties and sway the public toward reform-- such as calling for New York to reinstate the death penalty. The author provides details of New York's fiscal crisis of the 1970s, the book is almost about New York's societal and financial struggles as much as it is Donald Trump's. The author addresses the claims that Trump is a racist, dating back to his father's company's housing discrimination of the 1970s, to which he was party. D'Antonio reaches a conclusion that Trump is better attributed with "insensitivity" rather than "outright bigotry." At the height of a crime epidemic in 1989, Trump took out full-page ads calling for a reinstatement of the death penalty for a group of black teens arrested and charged with rape in Central Park. While convicted, DNA evidence later exonerated them as the real culprit confessed. The author suggests it is possible to frame this in Trump's larger statements about "roving bandits" committing crimes; it is not actually targeted at any one race but rather a class of people. While there are anecdotes from the 1970s that Trump did not want blacks living in his buildings, it is more likely that he did not want



low-income people who wouldn't pay their rent. Trump has employed plenty of minorities in his businesses and counted some as friends. But Trump, and his son Donald Jr., certainly believe their success is in part due to genetics. While Trump has railed against others for winning the "lucky sperm contest," his family believes they have God-given abilities that make them superior. There is an implicit racial bias in such statements. Trump's involvement, even leadership, in the "birther" movement is chronicled. Many see race baiting in that, although it is hard to make that charge stick exactly. More damning in the eyes of many were his comments about Mexican immigrants being "rapists" and other criminals, seemingly dumped on America by the Mexico that rejected them. Like Obama's birth certificate, Trump's comments do not stand up to scrutiny of the actual evidence and statistics. While it's chronicled that Donald is really friendly with some of his employees, sometimes doling out cash and other favors, the only moment of true compassion revealed in the book is Trump's encounter with a boy dying from cancer. The boy was granted a wish from the Make A Wish Foundation to be fired by Trump like an apprentice contestant. Trump couldn't bring himself to do it, giving the boy money instead. The book ends with the story of Trump's attempting to use a sort of eminent domain to build a world-class golf course in Scotland, for which he pulls out all the stops cajoling government officials. Trump faces a wave of grass-roots opposition from homeowners who do not want to be bought or forcibly removed from their land to build the golf course, eventually winning the public's favor. I would like to see the documentary You've Been Trumped made during this period. It seems the Scots are the only example of long-run collective defiance to Trump's desires, perhaps the Republican establishment can learn something from their battle. D'Antonio concludes: "Life is a never-ending competition for Trump." This appears to be true throughout his life, "loser" is his ultimate put-down and fear for himself. This is why I would bet on Trump making a third party run if denied the GOP nomination. My concern is, should he win the presidency, how will Trump handle that need for competition with Congress, the Supreme Court, and world powers? D'Antonio is purely the biographer, he offers no grandstand predictions. Four stars out of five.

OMG!, YA'LL.... if you would like to find out even MORE this honest, crooked *ÄfÄçÄ â -Ä â œ* dealing, unscrupulous, lying, history of Donald Trump all the way from his younger school days.... MUST READ! Hilarious, yet scary!

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Informative book, offers insight into the mind of Trump.

Very interesting and good read must get if your interested in American politics or big business.

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