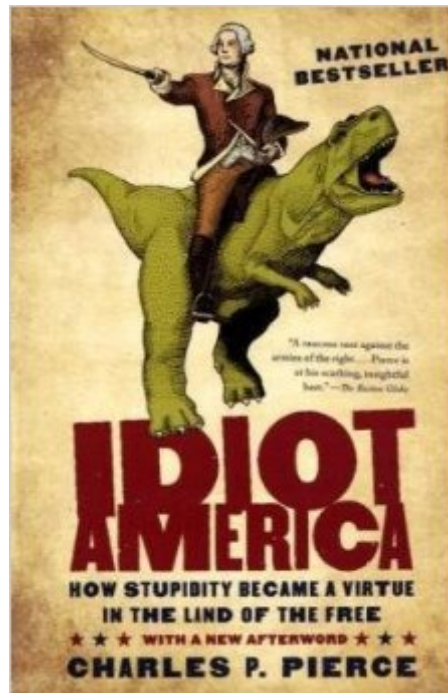


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Idiot America: How Stupidity Became A Virtue In The Land Of The Free



Synopsis

NATIONAL BESTSELLER The three Great Premises of *Idiot America*:
• Any theory is valid if it sells books, soaks up ratings, or otherwise moves units
• Anything can be true if someone says it loudly enough
• Fact is that which enough people believe. Truth is determined by how fervently they believe it
With his trademark wit and insight, veteran journalist Charles Pierce delivers a gut-wrenching, side-splitting lament about the glorification of ignorance in the United States. Pierce asks how a country founded on intellectual curiosity has somehow deteriorated into a nation of simpletons more apt to vote for an American Idol contestant than a presidential candidate. But his thunderous denunciation is also a secret call to action, as he hopes that somehow, being intelligent will stop being a stigma, and that pinheads will once again be pitied, not celebrated. Erudite and razor-sharp, *Idiot America* is at once an invigorating history lesson, a cutting cultural critique, and a bullish appeal to our smarter selves.

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Customer Reviews

"Idiot America" is great, informative book about concepts we see everyday. Also, many of the 1-star reviews are likely biased because of some of the political and religious topics noted. I think this book is definitely a full, 5-star book. The following comments aren't meant to be particularly negative towards the United States and the concepts in this book aren't exclusive to the USA. The concepts in "idiot America" exist all over the entire world. "Idiot America" is a superbly covered account of something that's very prevalent in the US. Charles Pierce provides the history of "cranks" (con artists

and showmen) from the founding of the nation to current examples today in contemporary America. I focused on TV and Radio because of its widespread impact on the populace today (even in the age of the growing Internet, which is becoming dominant). Much of TV and Talk Radio promote misinformation based on emotion, histrionics, shock, being loud, and over-the-top attempts to get ratings. The author notes "The 3 Great Premises: and applies them to many instances in this book: 1. Any theory is valid if it moves units (rating, and making money). 2. Anything can be true if it is said loudly enough. 3. Fact is what enough people believe (the Truth is what you believe). There are many examples in this book. Here are just a few: The NAFTA Superhighway, that never was: Even in the year 2003, a completely false rumor can end up being debated by Congressman, and end up on Lou Dobbs's TV show. In 2003, the Texas legislature approved the Trans Texas Corridor (TTC) to improve road and rail lines to facilitate the movement of goods within the state of Texas.

Well, wouldja look at that. As I write this, six one-star reviews, all saying exactly the same thing and missing the point in the process -- whining about how the book focuses on conservative US politics and whining about bias, while completely failing to understand how they prove the book's point. There are a few things that irk me about this book -- the near-exclusive focus on US conservatism is necessary to this book's theme, but the author would be well-served to look into things like the alternative medicine movement, which suffers from many of the same problems. (And would it have killed Pierce to include an index? I've said this in other reviews -- political books need indexes because without them it makes them look like they're trying to railroad the reader.) But to someone willing to take the time to read it, this book tells people what practically everyone should know about American politics -- that the American people are being sold a sob story about how experts are an elite that is keeping them from being The Best Damn Nation In The World. (In that regard, one should definitely read "The Paranoid Style In American Politics" by Richard Hofstadter -- it's over four decades old, but saw from the very beginning what has come into full bloom now with the barking lunacy of the American Right.) Pierce covers much territory -- he starts with the Creation Museum in Kentucky, then moves on into the 19th century crank Ignatius Donnelly and his popularization of Atlantis, and from there it's off to the races. The most painfully harrowing sections are those dealing with the Kitzmiller trial in Dover, PA, where a town drew up sides over good science vs.

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