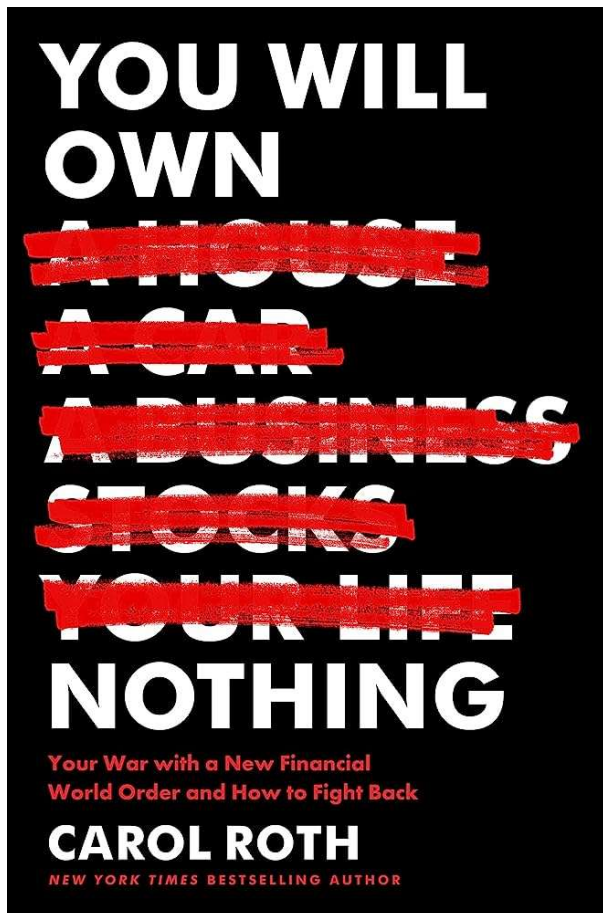


‘You Will Own Nothing’ operates on two levels

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“You Will Own Nothing: Your War with a New Financial World Order and How to Fight Back” by Carol Roth. New York, NY: Broadside Books (an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers), 2023, 352 pages, \$32.00 (hardcover).



“There’s a war coming,” Carol Roth proclaims in the introduction to “You Will Own Nothing: Your War with a New Financial World Order and How to Fight Back,” her new treatise and wake-up call. “A global war. You may be thinking about World War III – which, at the time of this writing, hangs in the balance with a certain probability – but I am talking about a different war.”

“Historically, war has come about in a quest not just for control over another country and its people, but also to overtake their economic resources,” she continues. “War is also often an outgrowth of desperation. It’s a last-ditch effort to cling to power or an attempt to cover up for political, social, or economic breakdowns in the land of the aggressor.”

So begins a fascinating and somewhat scary foray into the murky realm at the intersection of cold, hard reality and conspiracy-driven alternative explanations for the imbroglio in which we currently find ourselves. A staunch believer in free markets and entrepreneurship, Roth identifies three forces that are shaping what she describes as the “new financial world order.” These include increased involvement in the markets by the

government, including Congress and the Federal Reserve, enhanced pressure from the elites and their progeny, including the World Economic Forum and big business, and the seemingly insatiable intrusion of Big Tech into virtually every aspect of our lives and livelihoods.

“You Will Own Nothing” is extensively researched, with 28 pages of source notes at the conclusion of the introduction and 11 chapters that form the main narrative. Roth’s writing style is fluid and provocative; she definitely knows how to keep your attention. It is apparent from the first page that she leans to the right politically, although I did not find her conservative orientation to be obnoxious - as is often the case with some of her contemporaries who broach the same subject matter. In fact, I found myself in agreement with many of her observations as opposed to her interpretation of their significance and proposed response.

A celebrated 1995 magna cum laude alumnus of the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, Roth defines herself as “a self-styled recovering investment banker.” She regularly appears as a commentator on Fox Business, CNBC, CNN, Fox News and MSNBC, where she forcefully advocates for entrepreneurship and small businesses. Moreover, she has been named a Top 100 Small Business Influencer by Small Biz Trends for multiple years and her resume includes moderating the New York Times Small Business Summit in 2012, along with several other prestigious honors. Her previous books include “The War on Small Business: How the Government

Used the Pandemic to Crush the Backbone of America,” in 2021, and “The Entrepreneur Equation: Evaluating the Realities, Risks, and Rewards of Having Your Own Business,” an audiobook released in 2011.

By-the-way, she is big on social media, once trained in improv with Second City, has her own action figure, likes big hair, loves pinball and is ambidextrous (in case anyone is interested).

One of the strengths of her prose is the way Roth powerfully demonstrates how the financial landscape is *inextricably* intertwined with the larger cultural context in which it is embedded. Consider the following from “Socially Unacceptable: How Social Credit Leads to Owning You,” the inaugural chapter that initially piqued my interest in the central ideas the manuscript explores:

“Legendary comedian Dave Chappelle also faced a cancellation attempt when hundreds of Netflix employees staged a walkout in October 2021 to protest the comedian and his Netflix special ‘The Closer.’ Bolstered by social media virtue signalers, the employees said Chappelle’s content – which, by the way, is made up of jokes – was harmful, and they pushed Netflix to pull the special. One of the employees had been part of a small group that also crashed a Netflix board meeting in protest of Chappelle and his work.”

“Likely prompted by the streaming service losing more than \$50 billion in market cap after reporting their Q1 2022 earnings and seeing that entangling culture wars and business wasn’t good for their business, Netflix put out an employee memo. According to Variety, the memo included ‘a new section called ‘Artistic Expression.’ Explaining that the streamer will not ‘censor specific artists or voices’ even if employees consider the content ‘harmful,’ and bluntly states, ‘If you’d find it hard to support our content breadth, Netflix may not be the best place for you.’”

Anyone who knows me knows that I am vehemently against censorship of any kind, regardless of your cultural, political or religious affiliations. As such, I applaud Roth for her efforts to expose and combat that kind of nonsense. There are several aspects of her work that I do not agree with – such as the conspiracy theory aura that seems to permeate much of her thesis – but I do believe she makes a good case for her ‘take’ on what’s currently going on at the macrocosmic level. We should be concerned, or at least interested, in the direction our society seems to be edging toward on several fronts.

The book really operates on two levels. First, Roth is interested in raising awareness regarding the unhealthy trends she sees as picking up steam over the next few years, encapsulated by the World Economic Forum’s prediction that most people “will own nothing and be happy” by 2030. Second, she is proactively providing us with a roadmap for fighting back. I think most readers would agree that a world ruled by the elites (regardless of whether or not you believe this is part of an orchestrated ‘deep state’ conspiracy) would neither be beneficial nor desirable to most Americans.

As Charles Payne, Wall Street Strategies CEO puts it, “When it comes to who really rules the world and what kind of future they are shaping for the rest of us, so many things whispered and dismissed over the years have come into clear and undeniable focus. It’s not enough to know what’s happening and simply complain. Carol has laid out a plan for how to fight back and win.”

Maybe.

Honestly, where you fall on the political spectrum will determine how much you like this one. But I have also felt it enlightening to endeavor to see all sides of an issue and at least understand where those you disagree with are coming from. I put “You Will Own Nothing” in that category. Pick up a copy if you are with me on that.

Reviewed by Aaron W. Hughey, University Distinguished Professor, Department of Counseling and Student Affairs, Western Kentucky University.