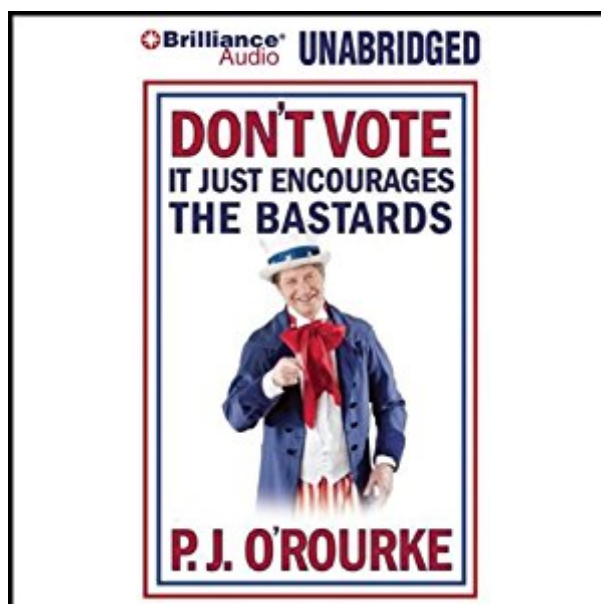


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# Don't Vote - It Just Encourages The Bastards



## Synopsis

In *Don't Vote - It Just Encourages the Bastards*, best-selling humorist P. J. O'Rourke, whose *On the Wealth of Nations*, about the foundations of economics, has been published in 18 languages, delivers a hilarious theory of politics. America's most subversive conservative, O'Rourke describes government as a devil's bargain between power, freedom, and responsibility, and goes on to hilariously skewer the politicians who have bargained with us to consolidate power, and the many mini-bargains and evasions that citizens have made with the consequences of their choices. P. J. O'Rourke begins with a party game that comes to us from late-night giggle sessions in all-girls boarding schools: "Kill, F@#%, Marry." Pick three men - or, in O'Rourke's version, three political ideologies, i.e., Democrat, Republican, and Independents (a.k.a. Confused). Then you have to choose which to terminate with extreme prejudice, which to go for a roll in the hay with, and which to settle down with permanently for a boring life in the suburbs. This astute tool of political analysis works on the parts of government as well as on the political thinking that led to those parts: Kill the Department of Education, screw Social Security, and marry the Armed Forces. The same for political policies: Screw the bailout, marry a balanced budget, and national health care kills you. O'Rourke explores the basis of our democracy - the aforementioned power, freedom, and responsibility, a.k.a. the "Kill, F@#%, Marry" of liberty and self-rule. O'Rourke favors - reluctantly, he admits - responsibility. From the woes of nation-building to the woes of letting politicians rebuild the automobile industry, no irresponsibility of America's political establishment is spared. Why, he asks, was the health care reform debate framed in terms of health insurance? ("When your house is on fire, do you call Allstate or 911?") Listen to P. J. O'Rourke on the pathetic nature of politics and laugh through your tears or, what the hell - just laugh.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

It was a good purchase, well worth reading. American politics are dominated by news bites and slices of incomplete information and people that vote often lack a basic understanding of economic principles or in my opinion much logic. P.J. O'Rourke writes a line about what is wrong with politics, half the voters are less than average intelligence. Using sarcasm and lots of analogies, he writes short examples of why certain political issues are often carried to absurdity, states like California with strict gun laws have lots of murders while those with very lax laws don't, for example, and also that we should probably have vote control because voting leads to politicians taking us into war which leads for far more deaths caused by guns. He writes about the futility of much of the left and right ranting (radio, books, etc.) because it's like preaching to the little old ladies wearing white hats in the choir. I enjoyed how he worded the observation that we allow 19 year olds to vote, but we don't trust them with a beer. Just because he uses lots of tongue-in-cheek humor, sarcasm, and analogies that could be seen as over the top in their usage, he is obviously a well read and well informed and well connected person and his writing is crisp and straight forward. Much of the chapters read like part of a conversation with a neighbor over a beer while bar-b-cuing some burgers. Good old fashioned complaining about how stupid so much of the American political scene is, was, and will be for the foreseeable future. He points out that taxes make Republicans, logic makes libertarians and having children makes conservatives.

P.J. O'Rourke's *Parliament of Whores: A Lone Humorist Attempts to Explain the Entire U.S.*

*Government* was one of the books that most influenced my political upbringing. It was a book that explained why American politics was so incredibly messed up, and was relentless in making fun of that fact. Even though it's almost 20 years old, it's still a classic, and well worth reading. Well, P.J. O'Rourke's at it again. He's written a virtual sequel to *Parliament of Whores* that shows that in the intervening 18 years American politics has managed to become even more screwed up. And there's no one better suited to lampooning the state of American politics than P.J. O'Rourke. But what separates this book from the many other books of political satire is that O'Rourke isn't just a bomb-throwing satirist. When, just a few pages in, O'Rourke is name-checking Michael Oakeshott, you know you're reading the work of an author who's done his homework. This book is a satire, to

be sure, but it's an intelligent and thoughtful satire. This book manages to mix Oakeshott, Adam Smith, and a schoolgirl's game of "Kill, F@#\$, Marry" into a devastating and intelligent critique of American politics. O'Rourke's takes on everything from health care reform to the national debt, and manages to skewer these hot-button political issues without coming across as preachy or pedantic. O'Rourke is America's best political satirist - because he's America's most well-read and intelligent political satirist.

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