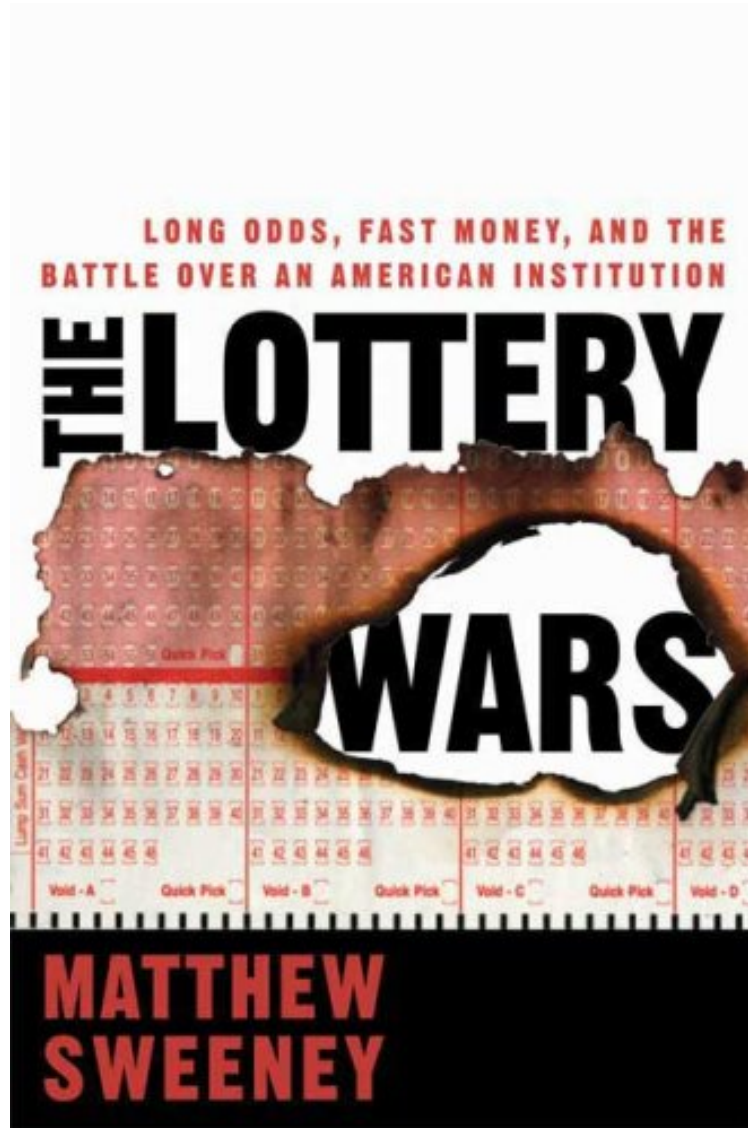


(Download) The Lottery Wars: Long Odds, Fast Money, and the Battle Over an American Institution

The Lottery Wars: Long Odds, Fast Money, and the Battle Over an American Institution

Matthew Sweeney

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Matthew Sweeney : The Lottery Wars: Long Odds, Fast Money, and the Battle Over an American Institution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Lottery Wars: Long Odds, Fast Money, and the Battle Over an American Institution:

1 of 3 people found the following review helpful. he made several journalistic missteps...By Ricky L. LaxEvery year, Americans spend \$50 billion playing the lottery. I spent \$25 on Matthew Sweeney's book The Lottery Wars: Long

Odds, Fast Money, and the Battle Over an American Institution, but I wish I'd spent it on instant-win scratch tickets instead. Sweeney is an engaging writer, but he made several journalistic missteps and picked an ultimately dull subject: the history of the American lottery. The Continental Congress used lottery profits to fund George Washington's army, and Benjamin Franklin organized a lottery to fund the defense of Philadelphia against a feared French invasion. Today, states use lottery profits to fund bridges, prisons and universities. Simply put: People don't like paying taxes, but do like playing the lottery. Especially poor people. "Games of blind chance," writes Sweeney, "in which everyone faces the same odds, had a strong appeal among all groups, particularly the lower-income and working classes, who had a chance at upward mobility that they would otherwise have little expectation of ever seeing." It didn't surprise me that the history of the lottery has been riddled with tales of fraud (what major government operation isn't?); what did surprise me was that the mechanics of lotto fraud are as dull as the mechanics of accounting fraud. Except for a single incident involving baby powder-filled ping-pong balls, most lotto fraud is the same ol' lobbyist-bribes-congressperson/congressperson-awards-contracts tale you've heard 10,000 times before. Another complaint: Sweeney repeats information and doesn't realize he's doing it. For example, on Page 123, Sweeney writes, "Two giants virtually run the American lottery system ... GTECH and Scientific Games. GTECH is the larger company ... While GTECH dominates the online numbers games of daily and weekly drawings ... its competitor, Scientific Games, has scratch tickets covered." And then, just 27 pages later, Sweeney writes, "The two biggest in the United States are GTECH and Scientific Games. GTECH dominates the lotto and number-picking games ... Scientific Games controls the scratch-ticket market in most states ... GTECH is easily the bigger of the two." Yet another complaint: Sweeney allows several inconsistencies to go unaddressed. For example, on Page 9, he says that "more than half of the country buys a lottery ticket or scratch card at one time or another," and then, just two pages later, he says, "More than half of Americans say they `strongly disapprove of gambling.'" I wish Sweeney had addressed whether the country is filled with hypocrites or whether Americans simply don't consider playing the lottery to be "gambling." If you're planning on attending a trivia-buff cocktail party any time soon, here are three entertaining factoids from Sweeney's book with which you can arm yourself: 1) The government used to have blind people draw lottery numbers to stave off charges of impropriety. 2) P. T. Barnum's grandfather, who managed a \$2.50 lottery, had the most awkward nickname in the history of nicknames: "Old Two Dollars and Fifty Cents." 3) The first Puritan lottery opponents were a father-and-son team named Increase and Cotton Mather. Now commit those facts to memory, take the \$25 you were going to spend on The Lottery Wars, drive to California and buy yourself a couple of instant-win scratch tickets. As they say in Connecticut, "You can't win if you don't play." 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. All Lawmakers Should Read By J.S. Excellent background on the lottery. All lawmakers should read this book prior to voting in a state lottery. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Keep your dollar and stop dreaming By Jim LaRegina "All you need is a dollar and a dream," a New York State lottery advertising campaign used to say. But had it promoted the odds of winning, might people have stopped dreaming and kept their dollars? Journalist Matthew Sweeney's book THE LOTTERY WARS: LONG ODDS, FAST MONEY, AND THE BATTLE OVER AN AMERICAN INSTITUTION reveals the United States lottery's roots in its British colony days, when such raffles help finance the crown on American shores. As those who can't afford to lose are likeliest to wager, through two and a half centuries authorities ban the numbers game but later revive it as a way to raise revenue through means other than taxation, thus promoting the lure of financial windfall to the very individuals they should protect from such temptation. Those who want to place bets will be able to do so illegally should there be no state-sanctioned lottery, you may argue. But, THE LOTTERY WARS asks, is organized crime advertising its numbers racket? People who can't afford to lose are not as likely to play the lottery without hearing, "All you need is a dollar and a dream." In fact, the book documents less gambling-related hardship in areas where one cannot legally bet on numbers. Making lotteries legal and creating the desire to play them need not go hand in hand. Read THE LOTTERY WARS.

The story behind the American lottery: gambling, lawsuits, corruption, moralizing, financial ruin, and more gambling.

Illuminating pithy poignant a richly informed account. Wall Street Journal Although the book is a fairly short read, it is also a pleasure: a non-polemical, fact-filled encounter with a kaleidoscopic view of the lottery a very strong book. San Francisco Chronicle Sweeney compellingly maps the seedy history of this American pastime. Mother Jones The Lottery Wars is a cool, necessary, entertaining eye-opener. Despite what some preachers and politicians would have us believe, gambling has been integral to American progress since before the founding fathers were born. Beginning at Jamestown in 1612, Matthew Sweeney brings us right up to Powerball payouts and politics, helping us understand who we are. James McManus, author of Positively Fifth Street Short of throwing money from the backs of trains, lotteries are surely the least efficient means of wealth transmission known to man. The Lottery Wars is the fascinating and, at times, horrifying story of how this financial contraption, the relentless and cynical marketing of optimism, came to be such a big part of our culture. A wonderful book. Richard Hoffer, author of Jackpot Nation Matthew Sweeney gives us an insightful glimpse into the ethos and exploitation in America's multi-billion-dollar lottery world. The psychology of hope and the tragedy of addiction meet head-on the greed of a state-sponsored racket. The Lottery Wars is an

indictment of a system that preys on the poor and the hopeless under the auspices of community good. You will never again view a discarded scratch ticket as symbol of harmless entertainment. Sally Denton, author of *Passion and Principle* and *The Money and the Power*