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Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era

By Michael Kimmel



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Angry White Men: American Masculinity at the End of an Era By Michael Kimmel

"[W]e can't come off as a bunch of angry white men."

Robert Bennett, chairman of the Ohio Republican Party

One of the enduring legacies of the 2012 Presidential campaign was the demise of the white American male voter as a dominant force in the political landscape. On election night, after Obama was announced the winner, a distressed Bill O'Reilly lamented that he didn't live in "a traditional America anymore." He was joined by others who bellowed their grief on the talk radio airwaves, the traditional redoubt of angry white men. Why were they so angry? Sociologist Michael Kimmel, one of the leading writers on men and masculinity in the world today, has spent hundreds of hours in the company of America's angry white men – from white supremacists to men's rights activists to young students –in pursuit of an answer. *Angry White Men* presents a comprehensive diagnosis of their fears, anxieties, and rage.

Kimmel locates this increase in anger in the seismic economic, social and political shifts that have so transformed the American landscape. Downward mobility, increased racial and gender equality, and a tenacious clinging to an anachronistic ideology of masculinity has left many men feeling betrayed and bewildered. Raised to expect unparalleled social and economic privilege, white men are suffering today from what Kimmel calls "aggrieved entitlement": a sense that those benefits that white men believed were their due have been snatched away from them.

Angry White Men discusses, among others, the sons of small town America, scarred by underemployment and wage stagnation. When America's white men feel they've lived their lives the 'right' way – worked hard and stayed out of trouble – and still do not get economic rewards, then they have to blame somebody else. Even more terrifying is the phenomenon of angry young boys. School shootings in the United States are not just the work of "misguided youth" or "troubled teens"—they're all committed by boys. These alienated young men are transformed into mass murderers by a sense that using violence against others is their right.

The future of America is more inclusive and diverse. The choice for angry white men is not whether or not they can stem the tide of history: they cannot. Their choice is whether or not they will be dragged kicking and screaming into that

inevitable future, or whether they will walk openly and honorably – far happier and healthier incidentally – alongside those they've spent so long trying to exclude.

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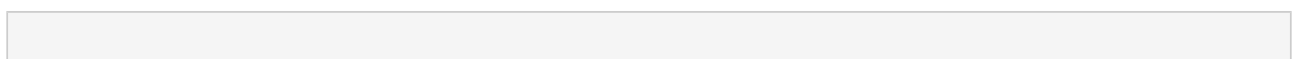
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Editorial Review

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Kimmel believes it comes down to aggrieved entitlement: the school shootings perpetrated by middle-class white male students, the men's-rights movement, white supremacists, the fathers'-rights groups, etc. There is, he elaborates, a strong (and getting dangerously stronger) feeling, among some white male Americans, that they are losing their place in society. The era of entitlement, when the good jobs and the best stuff was the white male American's due, has passed, replaced by a society in which—at least in the skewed view of the people about whom Kimmel is writing—white males are being systematically marginalized, passed over in favor of minorities and women. (For example, the men's-rights movement, the author says, is based on the belief that the oppression of men is a feminist conspiracy.) The angry white man, says Kimmel, isn't able, or perhaps willing, to face the simple truth: the era of entitlement is over. The book offers no real solution to the problem, delivering instead a lively, frequently scary look at a group of people who are trying, ever more desperately, to hang onto a world that no longer exists. --David Pitt

Review

"Kimmel's writing is open and engaging, reminiscent of a conversation with friends in a bar . . . Another worthwhile examination of important issues affecting men and, by extension, everyone else, from an author known for his insight into the subject." ---Kirkus

About the Author

Michael Kimmel is one of the world's leading researchers and writers on men and masculinity. He is the author of more than twenty books, including *Manhood in America* and *Guyland*. In addition, he is the founding editor of *Men and Masculinities*, an interdisciplinary scholarly journal.

Aaron Williamson has carried a lifelong love of storytelling into his audiobook narration career. Specializing in nonfiction works, he has a deep appreciation for the long hours of preparation and research an author invests in a finished book.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Michael Burnette:

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