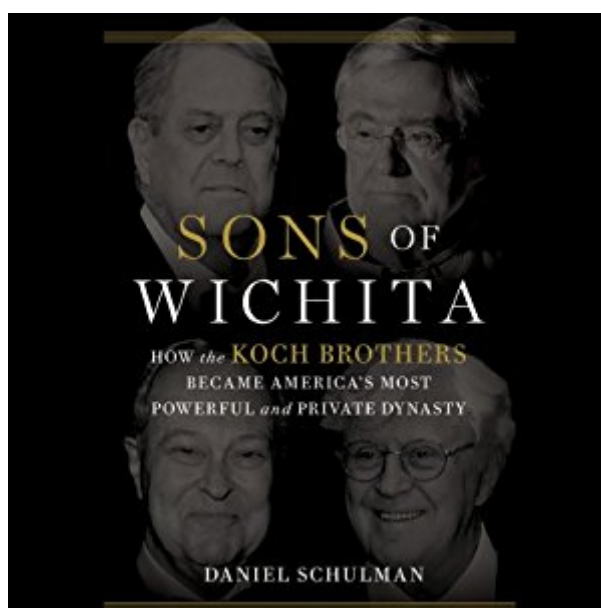


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# Sons Of Wichita: How The Koch Brothers Became America's Most Powerful And Private Dynasty



## Synopsis

Like the Rockefellers and the Kennedys, the Kochs are one of the most influential dynasties of the modern age, but they have never been the subject of a major biography... until now. Not long after the death of his father, Charles Koch, then in his early 30s, discovered a letter the family patriarch had written to his sons. "You will receive what now seems to be a large sum of money," Fred Koch cautioned. "It may either be a blessing or a curse." Fred's legacy would become a blessing and a curse to his four sons - Frederick, Charles, and fraternal twins David and Bill - who in the ensuing decades fought bitterly over their birthright, the oil and cattle-ranching empire their father left behind in 1967. Against a backdrop of scorched-earth legal skirmishes, Charles and David built Koch Industries into one of the largest private corporations in the world - bigger than Boeing and Disney - and they rose to become two of the wealthiest men on the planet. Influenced by the sentiments of their father, who was present at the birth of the John Birch Society, Charles and David have spent decades trying to remake the American political landscape and mainline their libertarian views into the national bloodstream. They now control a machine that is a center of gravity within the Republican Party. To their supporters, they are liberating America from the scourge of Big Government. To their detractors, they are political "contract killers", as David Axelrod, President Barack Obama's chief strategist, put it during the 2012 campaign. Bill, meanwhile, built a multi-billion dollar energy empire all his own, and earned notoriety as an America's Cup-winning yachtsman, a flamboyant playboy, and as a litigious collector of fine wine and Western memorabilia. Frederick lived an intensely private life as an arts patron, refurbishing a series of historic homes and estates. *Sons of Wichita* traces the complicated lives and legacies of these four tycoons, as well as their business, social, and political ambitions. No matter where you fall on the ideological spectrum, the Kochs are one of the most influential dynasties of our era, but so little is publicly known about this family, their origins, how they make their money, and how they live their lives. Based on hundreds of interviews with friends, relatives, business associates, and many others, *Sons of Wichita* is the first major biography about this wealthy and powerful family - warts and all.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I received this book as a Christmas present. The book was so enlightening I purchased it for a friend. The story of the Koch family is surprising again and again. The quirks of the brothers are only exceeded by the wealth the family has been able to amass. The notoriety that was pushed upon them was not sought. Their contributions are in marked contrast to publicity they glean. In the final chapters of the book one finds that they are not part and party to some organizations, but rather hold them in disdain. If you have any desire to know more about a family who has attempted to hold sway over our government and economy - this book is for you. It is full of surprises!

This is a well researched biography of the four Koch brothers and their families and associates. A very difficult job excellently done. Much of human interaction of strong willed exceptionally capable people with their own agendas. What is conspicuously missing is much description of the philosophy for which they have become so noted. Considering their impact on the political thinking of the US, it may be unfortunate that so little analysis is done of its impact on the US role on the world stage, especially considering its largely European origins and the competition with the political philosophies governing China and Russia. On the other hand, this probably should be the subject of major debate and analysis elsewhere.

I bought this book 1.5 years ago with the intention of understanding the inner world, motivations and thinking of these oil magnates who like to meddle in American politics. I had little expectation about liking the book as I saw it more as an exercise in learning American history. I started reading the book 4 days ago and couldn't put it down. I was very surprised and impressed by the exquisite and well-structured narrative of the Koch brothers' life stories. The author astutely first leaves out and then slowly reveals in much later chapters the more shocking details and surprising aspects of the brothers' politics, oil business, and family feud, a strategy that has

much stronger impact as the details are learned in the context of all the information read before it. This narrative structure makes the book feel like a suspenseful crime drama. The 4 brothers and the patriarch are involved in so many influential power and money grabbing machinations, in mindboggling family feuds and excesses, and in obsessive pursuits in controlling the government, denying climate change and in brainwashing people with their capitalistic ideologies that as a reader who is not personally acquainted with that lifestyle or mentality, it feels like someone suggested, like watching some episodes of the Dallas TV series. But once removed from the book narrative the shocking realization comes that these people are real, that the events described in the book are corroborated by witnesses, news articles, and by history, and that the actions of these brothers affect all of our lives and not for the better. This will be difficult to admit for some, such as, for example, the Metropolitan Museum of Art director Thomas P. Campbell who after getting \$65 million from one Koch brother renamed the Met new plaza with David Koch's name.

I read this book to help me understand why Charles Koch is so determined to deny climate science. But instead I was taken into a family squabble lasting decades. The book was an interesting read, but I remain uncertain as to why a well educated, brilliant man chooses to ignore his own contribution to the destruction of the environment in which his own grand children will inherit.

This book is astonishing! The author gives a detailed biography of each of the four Koch brothers, with nearly every page documented by facts. I was riveted by the author's description of the dysfunctional family. They were and are essentially power and money hungry, although at the same time, doing their best and making tons of money in the process. I ended up feeling sorry for them because money isn't everything and they've suffered for it. Excellent writing and facts on fascinating people!!

A great book that covers the lives of the Koch brothers and tells their story with compassion and truth. Perhaps surrounded by wealth their entire lives, they cannot see how the government could help them but only how they can hurt them through taxation and regulations. A great book to show how these Sons of Wichita continue to see the life around them with rose colored glasses and thinking since they can't get rid of government, they might as well be in control of it.

I've been hearing about the Koch family for a long time and the things I was hearing were concerning and fascinating because the Kochs had flown under the radar for years and enjoyed

being in that position. This book is an eye opener. Fascinating read

Schulman spins a tremendously interesting tale of one of the most powerful families in America (and therefore the world?). My only complaint and its minor, is that I thought the author got a little too far into the minutia of the daily lives of the Kochs at times. I can see why he did, however, as all five of the main characters (father Fred, and sons, Fredrick, Charles, David, and Bill) are such complicated and eccentric personalities. I believe Charles and David Koch have succeeded in shifting the entire political discussion in our country significantly to the right in the last 25 years. And, very importantly, their views are definitely libertarian and do not march in lock-step with the GOP, the Tea Party, or anyone else. They wield tremendous financial clout with sophistication and ruthlessness. Everyone interested in our country's future should read this book. Schulman is very fair in his discussion and treatment of the Koch brothers; as previously said, this is not a hit piece.

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