

# DARK MONEY

A film by Kimberly Reed



**This list of fiction and nonfiction books, compiled by Rachael Harkness of Portland Public Library, provides a range of perspectives on the issues raised by the POV documentary *Dark Money*.**

*Dark Money*, a political thriller, examines one of the greatest present threats to American democracy: the influence of untraceable corporate money on our elections and elected officials. The film takes viewers to Montana—a frontline in the fight to preserve fair elections nationwide—to follow an intrepid local journalist working to expose the real-life impacts of the U.S. Supreme Court's *Citizens United* decision.

**Mayer, Jane. *Dark Money: The Hidden History of the Billionaires Behind the Rise of the Radical Right*. Doubleday, 2016.**

Why is America living in an age of profound and widening economic inequality? Why have even modest attempts to address climate change been defeated again and again? Why do hedge-fund billionaires pay a far lower tax rate than middle-class workers? In a riveting and indelible feat of reporting, Jane Mayer illuminates the history of an elite cadre of plutocrats—headed by the Kochs, the Scaifes, the Olins, and the Bradleys—who have bankrolled a systematic plan to fundamentally alter the American political system.

**Teachout, Zephyr. *Corruption in America: From Benjamin Franklin's Snuff Box to Citizens United*. Harvard University Press, 2014.**

In 2010, one of the most consequential Court decisions in American political history gave wealthy corporations the right to spend unlimited money to influence elections. Justice Anthony Kennedy's majority opinion treated corruption as nothing more than explicit bribery, a narrow conception later echoed by Chief Justice Roberts in deciding *McCutcheon v. FEC* in 2014. With unlimited spending transforming American politics for the worse, warns Zephyr Teachout, *Citizens United* and *McCutcheon* were not just bad law but bad history.

**Collins, Ronald K.L. *When Money Speaks: The McCutcheon Decision, Campaign Finance Laws, and the First Amendment*. Top Five Books, 2014.**

On April 2, 2014, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down aggregate limits on how much money individuals could contribute to political candidates, parties, and committees. The *McCutcheon v. FEC* decision fundamentally changes how people (and corporations, thanks to *Citizens United*) can fund campaigns, opening the floodgates for millions of dollars in new spending, which had been curtailed by campaign finance laws going back to the early 1970s. *When Money Speaks* is the definitive—and the first—book to explain and dissect the Supreme Court's controversial ruling in *McCutcheon*, including analysis of the tumultuous history of campaign finance law in the U.S. and the new

legal and political repercussions likely to be felt from the Court's decision

**Mutch, Robert E. *Campaign Finance Reform: What Everybody Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2016.**

In 2015, well over half of the money contributed to the presidential race came from roughly 350 families. The 100 biggest donors gave as much as 2 million small donors combined. Can we still say we live in a democracy if a few hundred rich families provide a disproportionate shares of campaign funds? Congress and the courts are divided on that question, with conservatives saying yes and liberals saying no. The debate is about the most fundamental of political questions: how we define democracy and how we want our democracy to work.

**Shapiro, Bruce. *Shaking the Foundations: 200 Years of Investigative Journalism in America*. Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, 2003.**

Great investigative journalism is present-tense literature: part detective story, part hellraising. This is the first anthology of its kind, bringing together outstanding (and often otherwise unavailable) practitioners of the muck-raking tradition, from the Revolutionary era to the present day. Ranging from mainstream figures like Woodward and Bernstein to legendary iconoclasts such as I. F. Stone and Ida B. Wells-Barnett, the dispatches in this collection combine the thrill of the chase after facts with a burning sense of outrage.

**Smith, Bradley A. *Unfree Speech: The Folly of Campaign Finance Reform*. Princeton University Press, 2001.**

At a time when campaign finance reform is widely viewed as synonymous with cleaning up Washington and promoting political equality, Bradley Smith, a nationally recognized expert on campaign finance reform, argues that all restriction on campaign giving should be eliminated. In *Unfree Speech*, he presents a bold, convincing argument for the repeal of laws that regulate political spending and contributions, contending that they violate the right to free speech and ultimately diminish citizens' power.

**Broder, David S. *Democracy Derailed: Initiative Campaigns and the Power of Money*. Harcourt, 2000.**

A new form of government is sweeping across America: the initiative process, available in half the states and hundreds of cities. Where once most state laws were passed by legislatures, now voters decide directly on such explosive issues as drugs, affirmative action, casino gambling, assisted suicide, and human rights. Ostensibly driven by public opinion, the initiative process is, in reality, manipulated by moneyed interests, often funded by out-of-state millionaires pursuing their own agendas. In this highly controversial book David Broder tells how this revolution came about.

## ADULT FICTION

**Miller, Jennifer. *The Year of the Gadfly*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.**

Iris Dupont, a budding journalist whose only confidant is the chain-smoking specter of Edward R. Murrow, feels sure she can break into the ranks of *The Devil's Advocate*, the Party's underground newspaper, and there uncover the source of its blackmail schemes and vilifying rumors.

**Drury, Allen. *Advise and Consent*. WordFire Press, 2014. Originally published 1959.**

From a Senate old-timer's wily maneuvers, a vicious demagogue's blistering smear campaign, the ugly personal jealousies that turn a highly qualified candidate into a public spectacle, to the tragic martyrdom of a presidential aspirant who refuses to sacrifice his principles for his career—never has there been a more revealing picture of Washington's intricate political, diplomatic, and social worlds. *Advise and Consent* is a timeless story with clear echoes of today's headlines.

**Warren, Robert Penn. *All the King's Men*. Penguin Books, 2007. Originally published 1946.**

*All the King's Men* is considered the finest novel ever written on American politics. Set in the 1930s, this book traces the rise and fall of Willie Stark, who resembles the real-life Huey 'Kingfish' Long of Louisiana. Stark begins his political career as an idealistic man of the people but soon becomes corrupted by success.

**Huxley, Aldous. *Brave New World*. New York: Harper, 1932.**

Aldous Huxley's profoundly important classic of world literature, *Brave New World* is a searching vision of an unequal, technologically-advanced future where humans are genetically bred, socially indoctrinated, and pharmaceutically anesthetized to passively uphold an authoritarian ruling order—all at the cost of our freedom, full humanity, and perhaps also our souls.

## NONFICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Christelow, Eileen. *Vote*. Clarion Books, 2003.**

Suppose your town is about to choose a new mayor. How will you do it? You'll vote! Using a town's mayoral election as a model, this lively introduction to voting covers every step of the process from the start of the campaign to Election Day.

**DK. *The Politics Book*. Penguin Random House, 2013.**

From ancient and medieval philosophers such as Confucius and Thomas Aquinas, to revolutionary thought leaders such as Thomas Jefferson and Leon Trotsky, to the voices who have shaped modern politics today — Mao Zedong, Malcolm X, Che Guevara, and more — *The Politics Book* clearly and simply explains more than 100 groundbreaking ideas in the history of political thought.

**St. George, Judith, illustrated by David Small. *So You Want to be President?* Philomel Books, 2004. Originally published 2000.**

Presents an assortment of facts about the qualifications and characteristics of U.S. presidents, from George Washington to George W. Bush.

**Roper, Jon. *American Politics: A Beginner's Guide*. One-world Publications, 2011.**

To understand the world events today, you need to understand American politics. Exploring the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Jon Roper provides a sharp analysis of how history has shaped the way America governs itself. Examining the recent emergence of the right-wing Tea Party movement, President Obama's administration, American foreign policy, and the role of powerful lobbies, this is the perfect primer for anyone interested in the world's most powerful (and controversial) country.

## FICTION FOR YOUNGER READERS

**Cronin, Doreen. *Duck for President*. Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers, 2004.**

Here is a duck who began in a humble pond. Who worked his way to farmer. To governor. And now, perhaps, to the highest office in the land. Some say, if he walks like a duck and talks like a duck, he is a duck. We say, if he walks like a duck and talks like a duck, he will be the next president of the United States of America.

**Seuss, Dr. *The Butter Battle Book*. Random House, 1984.**

Engaged in a long-running battle, the Yooks and the Zooks develop more and more sophisticated weaponry as they attempt to outdo each other.

**Doctorow, Cory. *Little Brother*. Tor Teen, 2010.**

Marcus, a.k.a "w1n5t0n," is only seventeen years old, but he figures he already knows how the system works—and how to work the system. Smart, fast, and wise to the ways of the networked world, he has no trouble outwitting his high school's intrusive but clumsy surveillance systems. But his whole world changes when he and his friends find themselves caught in the aftermath of a major terrorist attack on San Francisco.

**Levithan, David. *Wide Awake*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 2008.**

In the not-too-impossible-to-imagine future, a gay Jewish man has been elected president of the United States. Until the governor of one state decides that some election results in his state are invalid, awarding crucial votes to the other candidate, and his fellow party member. Thus is the inspiration for couple Jimmy and Duncan to lend their support to their candidate by deciding to take part in the rallies and protests. Along the way comes an exploration of their relationship, their politics, and their country, and sometimes, as they learn, it's more about the journey than it is about reaching the destination.