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Mad as Hell: The Crisis of the 1970s and the Rise of the Populist Right

Dominic Sandbrook

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“I’m mad as hell, and I’m not going to take it anymore!” The words of Howard Beale, the fictional anchorman in the 1970s hit film *Network*, struck a chord with a generation of Americans. From the disgrace of Watergate to the humiliation of the Iran hostage crisis, the American Dream seemed to be falling apart.

In this magisterial new history, Dominic Sandbrook re-creates the schizophrenic atmosphere of the 1970s, the world of Henry Kissinger and Edward Kennedy, Anita Bryant and Jerry Falwell, Bruce Springsteen and Tom Landry. He takes us back to an age when feminists were on the march and the Communists seemed to be winning the Cold War, but also when a new kind of right-wing populism was transforming American politics from the ground up. Those years gave us organic food, disco music, gas lines, and gay rights—but they also gave us Proposition 13, the neoconservative movement, and the rise of Ronald Reagan.

From the killing fields of Vietnam to the mean streets of Manhattan, this is a richly compelling picture of the turbulent age in which our modern-day populist politics was born. For those who remember the days when you could buy a new Ford Mustang II but had to wait hours to fill the tank, this could hardly be a more vivid book. And for those born later, it is the perfect guide to a tortured landscape that shaped our present, from the financial boardroom to the suburban bedroom: the extraordinary world of 1970s America.

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