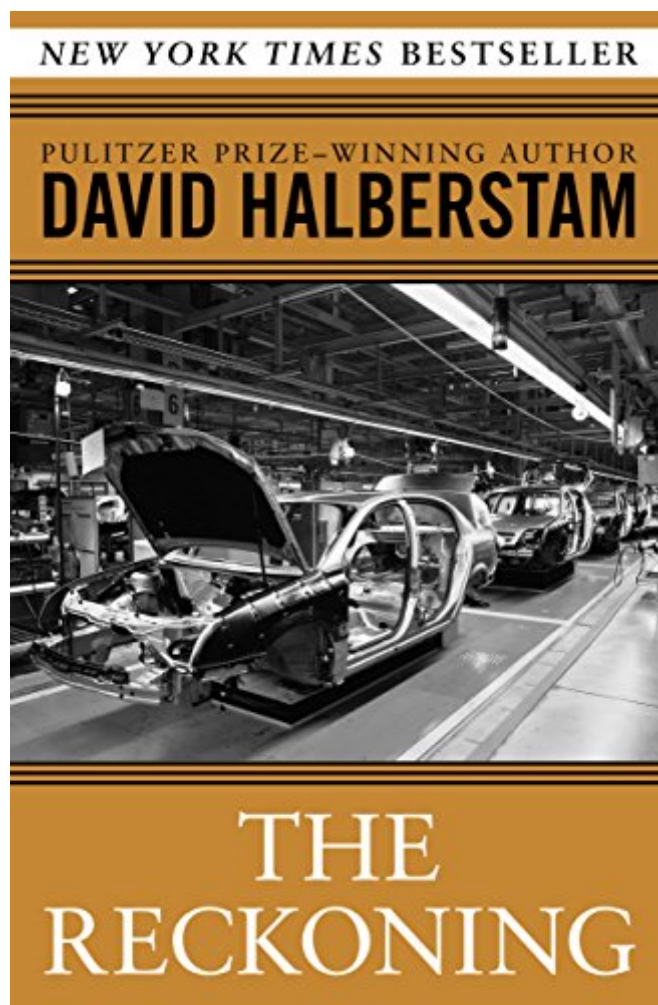


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The Reckoning



Synopsis

Told with panoramic detail and gripping insight, *The Reckoning* is the inside story of automakers Ford and Nissan and the collapse of America's industrial supremacy. After generations of creating high-quality automotive products, American industrialists began losing ground to the Japanese auto industry in the decades after World War II. David Halberstam, with his signature precision and absorbing narrative style, traces this power shift by delving into the boardrooms and onto the factory floors of the American Ford Motor Company and Japan's Nissan. Different in every way—from their reactions to labor problems to their philosophies and leadership styles—the two companies stand as singular testaments to the challenges brought by the rise of the global economy. With intriguing vignettes about Henry Ford, Lee Iacocca, and other visionary industrial leaders, *The Reckoning* remains a powerful and enlightening story about manufacturing in the modern age, and how America fell woefully behind. This ebook features an extended biography of David Halberstam.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I read a borrowed copy of this book over a decade ago and it has proven memorable and

useful. Memorable because 12 years after reading it, I still vividly recall many episodes: for example, we read of the American engineer and his wife who took Japanese citizenship during WWII because all their friends were Japanese, but still sent their sons back to the US; Halberstam writes of the president of Nissan's US branch (Datsun) who incredibly had enough strength of character to rename Datsun's new sportscar the Z80 (in North America) from the FairLady (in Japan) against the CEO's wishes; Ford's dismal accounting practices of the early 20th century when all invoices were put in a pile and weighed (!) to estimate how much cash was required in the checking account; and most rewarding of all, the story of Professor Deming, the American inventor of modern quality control, arrogantly overlooked in his homeland and treated as an oracle of wisdom in industrial Japan. I also found the Reckoning useful, because for the fifteen years I've lived in Japan I've relied and built upon the insights it gave me. David Halberstam presents an accurate evaluation of how Japanese business often works, especially manufacturing businesses. Halberstam doesn't advocate following Japanese practices, he merely presents them and evaluates their success. Sometimes these practices can be applied, and sometimes they can't. Japanese office practices work well in Japan because they rely on local customs. For example, the reason Deming found a voice in Japan is that a Tokyo University professor took notice of his work and called several old students who were now executives in Japan's car industry. They invited Deming and listened to his lectures.

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