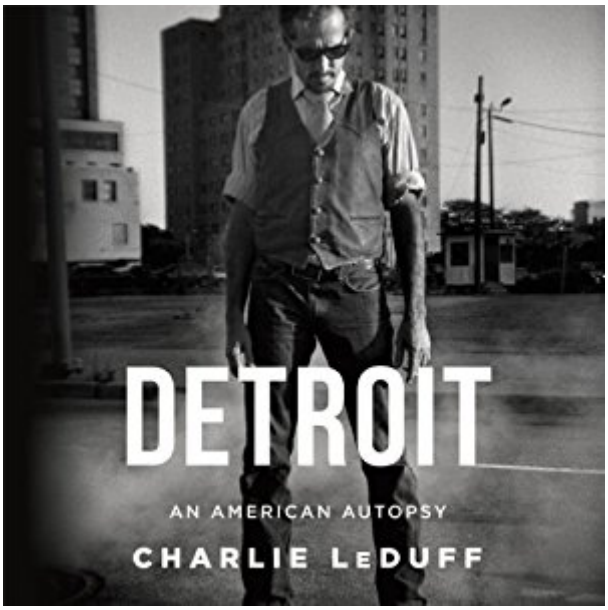
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Detroit: An American Autopsy



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Synopsis

In the heart of America, a metropolis is quietly destroying itself. Detroit, once the richest city in the nation, is now its poorest. Once the vanguard of America’s machine age - mass production, automobiles, and blue-collar jobs - Detroit is now America’s capital for unemployment, illiteracy, foreclosure, and dropouts. With the steel-eyed reportage that has become his trademark and the righteous indignation that only a native son can possess, journalist Charlie LeDuff sets out to uncover what has brought low this once-vibrant city, his city. In doing so, he uncovers the deeply human drama of a city filled with some of the strongest and strangest people our country has to offer.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

With a keen eye and a razor wit, Charlie LeDuff performs an autopsy of one of our great American cities. He documents the corruption and crime, but, also the corruption of the spirit at the heart of so many American cities today. His eye for the tragedy and the pathos in the lives of the everyday people caught up in this failure makes for a compelling, stark read. In the light of our current political climate, the fate of these people in the cities has an impact that should resonate with all of us comfortably ensconced in the suburbs. We need to listen to these voices, and, we as a people should take action to solve it.

An amazing book. It’s a cliche, but I couldn’t put it down.In the best tradition of journalists who use

fiction techniques to bring their stories alive, Charlie LeDuff makes you feel as if you are right there, on these streets, meeting these people and getting a vivid sense of what they're experiencing. Make no mistake: LeDuff is not interested in covering the positive things that are happening in Detroit right now (and yes, there are many positive developments). That's not his beat. I'm guessing that it doesn't inspire him the way the down-and-outers do. LeDuff introduces you to people you wouldn't want to meet outside of the pages of a book: dangerous criminals, crooked politicians and people so caught in the grip of poverty, violent crime and hopelessness that their pain is hard to think about.LeDuff is no objective journalist; he inserts himself into his stories, interacting with the people he's supposed to be covering, giving himself a role. There is an ego at work here, but it's what gives his writing such a strong, distinctive voice. He mercilessly turns his attention on his own family's troubles as well, letting us in on broken relationships, substance abusers and a surprise bit of genealogy.You don't have to be a Detroiter to find this book compelling. It's riveting. It's also a cautionary tale. The circumstances that have brought Detroit to its present condition exist in other cities. The outsourcing of industrial jobs, shifting demographics and government corruption have altered great swaths of the American landscape. Detroit holds an uncomfortable mirror up to America - and Charlie LeDuff, with this book, brings that mirror even closer.

Charlie Leduff has written what I consider one of the finest works of journalism I've ever read. Leduff returned home to Detroit, taking a reporting gig as a reporter for the Detroit News. He shares both personal trauma and loss as significant as that experienced by many of the firefighters, police and regular citizens. Lexus earned the respect and appreciation of the countless people he interviewed and wrote about. I was equally of the things he wrote about his brothers. The epilogue is truly remarkable and was a very appropriate way to close the story.

It is clear that LaDuff has the facts right, having lived the experience as a reporter who knows how to find the facts. It is clearly written, and he spares no unpleasant facts about the characters. Suspicions confirmed about many of these corrupt people. My only "problem" with the book is that he seems to be trying to write it as if he was Mickey Spillane. Gritty, snarky, shocking. But, having just written this, it occurs to me that that is probably right for this subject and adds credibility.

Being a firefighter, I've always respected Charlie LaDuff. This man showed enormous care and respect to the beleaguered Detroit EMS, Fire and Police depts. Detroit FD fights more working fires than any other fire dept in the U.S.I have always had an interest in Detroit and how a major

American city and manufacturing powerhouse can collapse. Charlie gives an inside look at what killed Detroit. He also gives insight into his own life and what Detroit means to him.

Charlie LeDuff always amused me in the past. I enjoyed his television series, read him sporadically on the web in excerpts, and generally admired his style.This book reminded me of sitting across the table from your best friend at a bar about 8 beers into the conversation. All the veneer is off when you click down that 7th long-neck on the Formica and really talk trash about the wretches you've encountered. The kind of conversation where you both wind up raging or crying, but it's impossible to walk away from the table with anything left in your guts except the beer and popcorn. You've spilled all the rest and you're emotionally drained.That's what Charlie has done in this book about the decline of Detroit.He's the best of the genre and it's a blessing to read his work. Gritty, profane, loud, angry, and honest. Thanks, Mr. LeDuff for buying the 5th round.

Hard hitting, unflinching look at Detroit in the 2000s, up to but not including the bankruptcy. Tough - guy prose, the kind that fewer and fewer journalists use anymore. Not really an "autopsy" in that it's not particularly forensic or analytical, more a series of anecdotes that depict the consequences of whatever caused Detroit's collapse -- reported very starkly and bluntly. Well done and memorable.

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