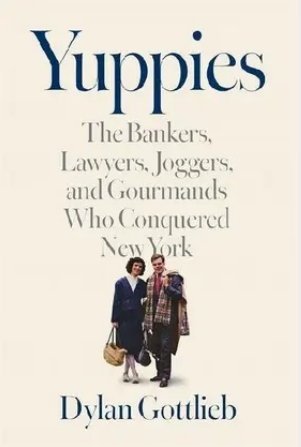
Gottlieb

Yuppies

The Bankers, Lawyers, Joggers, and Gourmands Who Conquered New York



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One of the New Yorker's "Best Books of 2026 So Far" How the rise of Wall Street in the 1980s lured a generation of young upstarts to New York, unleashing a political and cultural transformation whose national repercussions are still felt today. Yuppies may have been a classic 1980s stereotype, but they were also a very real demographic: a wave of hundreds of thousands of highly educated young professionals that washed over New York during that decade. As Wall Street moved to the center of American life, it drew a generation of young people into its vortex. For the first time, banks recruited roughly one-third of graduating classes from top universities. America’s economy had a new main character. Young bankers extracted profits from waning industries, shattering the foundations on which stable middle-class employment had long rested. Yuppie lawyers devised deals and tax strategies that eroded workers’ power and wages. As consumers, yuppies created new cultures of fitness and of excess, popularizing marathon running and fine dining as status markers. As city-dwellers, they were pioneers of gentrification. And as voters and political donors, yuppies engineered a takeover of local and national government, using their wealth to back candidates who would remake the country in their image. Yuppies reminds us that we still live in the shadow of the greed-is-good 1980s: Our cities are playgrounds for the wealthy, and Wall Street and Washington remain locked in a tight embrace. Dylan Gottlieb’s exquisite recounting leaves no doubt that the yuppie takeover of New York began a more unequal chapter in American life—one we continue writing today.

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