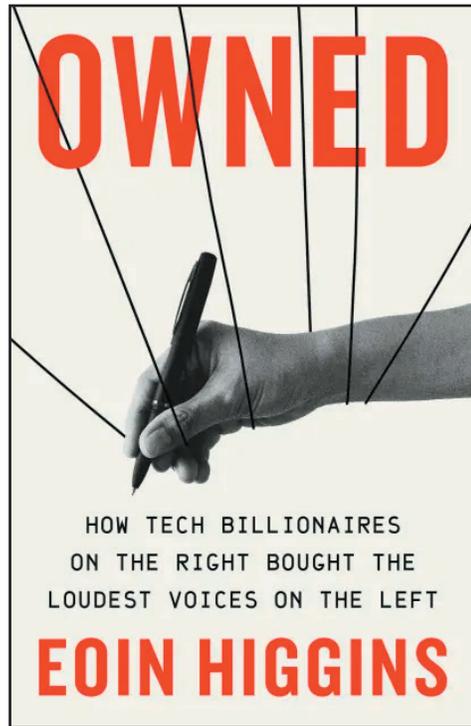


**Owned by Eoin Higgins.**  
**Bold Type Books,**  
**Hachette, New York, 2025.**

*Review By Ed Meek*

Eoin Higgins writes about journalism and media. Higgins is a successful journalist who has written for the NYT, the Washington Post, Counterpunch and The Huffington Post. In *Owned* he delves into the rightward turn taken by the tech industry and billionaires like Elon Musk, Marc Andreessen and Peter Thiel. He focuses on two formerly liberal star journalists: Matt Taibbi and Glen Greenwald. Higgins details Musk's acquisition of Twitter (now X) and the negative effects Musk has had on the platform. He explains how the libertarian world of Silicon Valley is apolitical as long as the tech bros are getting money and being left alone by the government. Higgins posits that they decided Trump would keep the money coming without requirements like DEI.



If you reacted with surprise at the turn to the right by high tech, corporate CEO's and Elon Musk and wondered what happened to Matt Taibbi, who covered politics for Rolling Stone, and Glen Greenwald, who wrote in support of Wikileaks and Chelsea Manning, Higgins provides an explanation by digging into their transition to the right.

Higgin's theory is it's all about the money. Taibbi was able to leave Rolling Stone and build a higher paying audience on Substack. Greenwald found a platform on Fox and The Intercept. Musk took over Twitter, ostensibly to promote free speech, but he has instead pushed conspiracy theories like Tucker Carlson's "great replacement theory" that claims Democrats are pro-immigration in order to import voters and undermine the culture and identity of America, (yet in the last election, Trump received almost half of the Latino vote). Musk also censors the left with the help of all the MAGAs who have joined X. Lately Musk has been calling for a new political party after attacking the Big Beautiful Bill as irresponsible for increasing the deficit and steering America toward financial collapse.

Many of us were puzzled by the rightward turn of Taibbi and Greenwald. Taibbi wrote scathing articles about the Trump campaign leading to 2016. Just before the election he insightfully realized that Trump could win after witnessing his cult like support at rallies. You may remember the NYT on the other hand predicted Hillary Clinton had a 90% chance of winning. Taibbi also wrote a series of articles about the 2008 crash arguing (over simplistically) that it was caused by corruption. Glen Greenwald was a brave voice supporting Chelsea Manning and Wikileaks and always willing to take positions outside mainstream media.

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Higgins follows Taibbi's investigation into Hunter Biden's laptop (a favorite target of the MAGAS). The Biden administration, with twitter's cooperation, may have suppressed information about Hunter Biden's corruption, but Taibbi never really found anything. Meanwhile, he was attacked by the left relentlessly for investigating. This led to his move to Substack where he has a big following.

Higgins points out that Substack was created by Marc Andreessen (founder of Netscape) and Theil (PayPal) as a way to move liberal journalists out of mainstream media publications. Higgins argues that the right wing has been very effective at manipulating and creating new media to influence Americans to support Republicans.

Higgins is on solid ground in that argument and the details make for interesting reading. At the same time, Higgins glides over the excesses of the left from the resistance movement through the Biden years. Although Biden was elected as a moderate, he embraced DEI and pressure from nonprofits and academia to regulate business and big tech. At the same time, academia was forcing the adoption of alternative pronouns, terms like LatinX, trans rights, and revisionist history like the 1619 Project.

Part of the reason Greenwald, Taibbi and high tech turned against the left was due to the oppressiveness emanating from positions taken by the left wing of the Democratic Party, and although the libertarian party is insignificant as a political organization, many Republicans are libertarians. Yellowstone, at one point the most popular show on television, is a libertarian dream of a rancher so rich and powerful he can do whatever he wants, regardless of the law. Andreessen also had an interest in cryptocurrency and the Biden administration blocked crypto where Trump decided to endorse it because he could make money from it. Now laws have been passed to legitimize it.

Higgins' *Owned* is a provocative take on our shifting politics and the role media plays. Higgins doesn't offer a solution to the rightward lurch the country has taken other than to point out that no one should be rich enough individually to take control of media to influence politics.