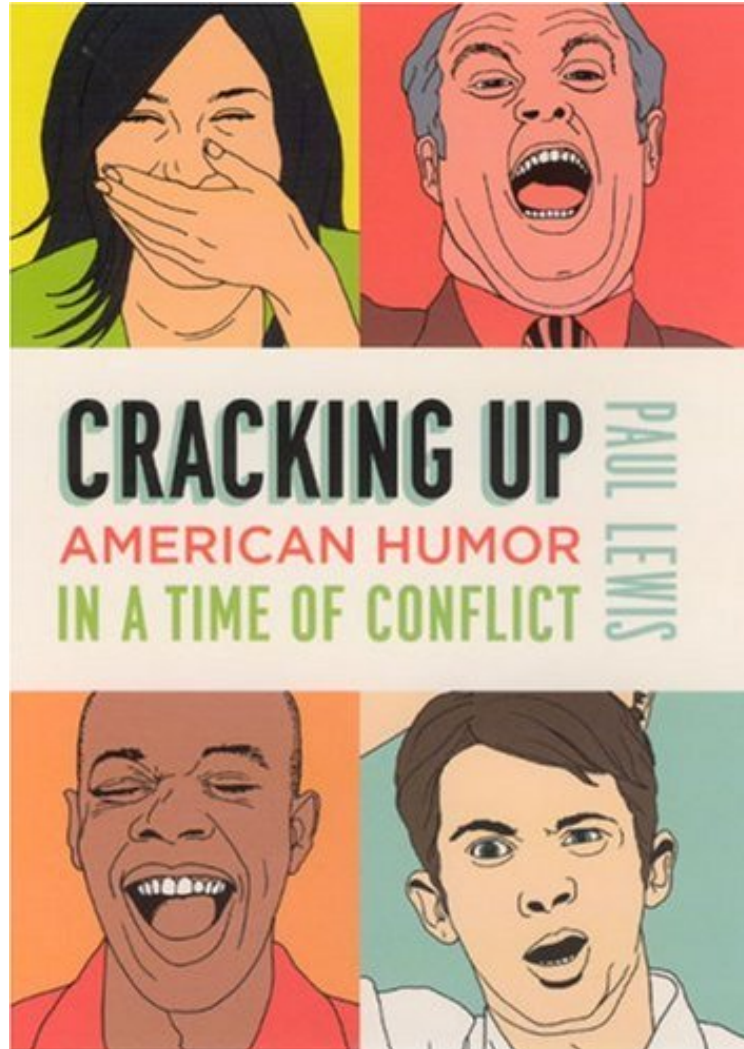


(Read free) Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict

Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict

Paul Lewis

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Paul Lewis : Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Cracking Up: American Humor in a Time of Conflict:

What do Jon Stewart, Freddy Krueger, Patch Adams, and George W. Bush have in common? As Paul Lewis shows in Cracking Up, they are all among the ranks of joke tellers who aim to do much more than simply amuse. Exploring topics that range from the sadistic mockery of Abu Ghraib prison guards to New Age platitudes about the healing power of laughter, from jokes used to ridicule the possibility of global climate change to the heartwarming performances of hospital clowns, Lewis demonstrates that over the past thirty years American humor has become

increasingly purposeful and embattled. Navigating this contentious world of controversial, manipulative, and disturbing laughter, *Cracking Up* argues that the good news about American humor in our time—that it is delightful, relaxing, and distracting—is also the bad news. In a culture that both enjoys and quarrels about jokes, humor expresses our most nurturing and hurtful impulses, informs and misinforms us, and exposes as well as covers up the shortcomings of our leaders. Wondering what's so funny about a culture determined to laugh at problems it prefers not to face, Lewis reveals connections between such seemingly unrelated jokers as Norman Cousins, Hannibal Lecter, Rush Limbaugh, Garry Trudeau, Jay Leno, Ronald Reagan, *Beavis and Butt-Head*, and Bill Clinton. The result is a surprising, alarming, and at times hilarious argument that will appeal to anyone interested in the ways humor is changing our cultural and political landscapes.