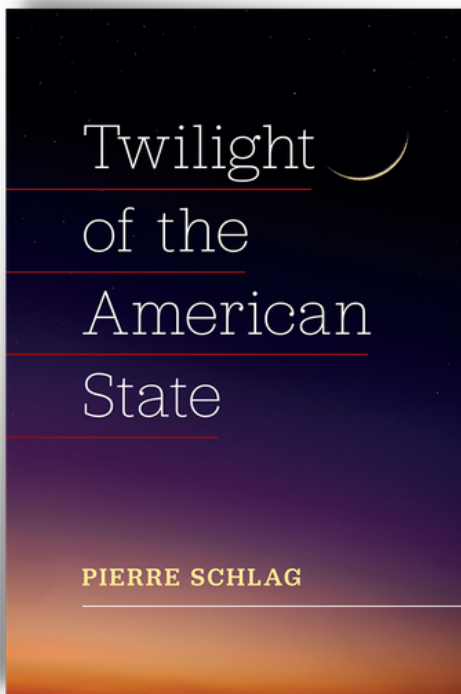




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# TWILIGHT OF THE AMERICAN STATE

AN ESSAY

Pierre Schlag

The sudden emergence of the Trump nation surprised nearly everyone. Journalists, pundits, political consultants, academics were nearly all caught off guard. When Trump won in 2016, his ascendancy was widely viewed as a fluke, an aberration—the result of Russian meddling, interference by Comey, a weak candidate. But time showed it was not a fluke, but the rise of a movement—angry, militant, revanchist, and unabashedly authoritarian.

How did this happen? *Twilight of the American State* offers as its unique contribution, a sweeping exploration of the role played by law and legal institutions in preparing the grounds for this rebellious movement. The controversial argument is that, viewed as a legal matter, the American state is not just a liberal democracy, as most Americans believe. Rather, the American state is composed of an uneasy and unstable combination of different versions of the state—liberal democratic, administered, neoliberal, and dissociative. Each of these of these versions arose through its own law, and legal institutions. Each emerged at different times historically. Each was prompted by deficits in the prior versions. Each has survived displacement by succeeding versions. All remain active in the contemporary moment—creating the political-legal dysfunction America confronts today.

Pierre J. Schlag maps out a big picture view of the tribulations of the American state. The book abjures conventional academic frameworks (sterile), sets aside prescriptions for quick fixes (won't work), dispenses with lamentations about polarization (whistling in the wind), and bypasses historical celebrations of the American Spirit (useless sentimentalism).

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