

## THE CANCEL CULTURE CURSE: FROM RAGE TO REDEMPTION IN A WORLD GONE MAD

**In a groundbreaking first, cancel culture and its core elements are clearly defined, and a convincing case is made against this fundamentally un-American practice.**

**"As a survivor of cancel culture who has fought back, I can attest that this book matters. It is an important part of the struggle for liberty and against the curse of conformity. One can agree or disagree with parts of it— read it and decide for yourself — but all who support freedom of speech must join in the authors' war against those who would cancel our hard-earned rights."**

— Alan Dershowitz, *New York Times* bestselling author

**"In clear, easy to understand prose, *The Cancel Culture Curse* is the definitive guide to the malignant phenomenon that's come to characterize modern American life. If you want to learn about cancel culture and make a contribution to eliminating this uniquely idiotic and toxic social ill, this is the book for you."**

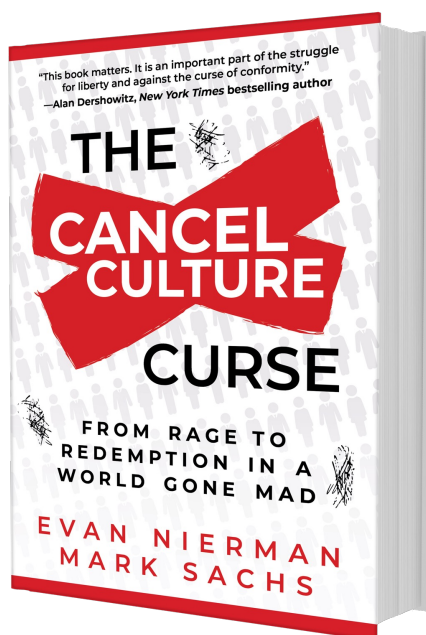
— Peter Boghossian, founding faculty, University of Austin

Cancel culture is an insidious force in society today. In the seconds it takes to make one regrettable social media post—or wind up on the wrong side of a false accusation or misunderstanding—reputations, relationships, and careers are destroyed. Have we entered an era when people cannot make mistakes; where no apology or change of heart can ever bring about forgiveness?

Making a comeback used to be a celebrated American ideal. But have the roads to redemption been permanently blocked by internet mobs seeking vengeance?

In ***The Cancel Culture Curse***, global crisis manager Evan Nierman and his colleague Mark Sachs examine the impact of cancel culture in today's media-driven world. The authors also explore the history of cancel culture and the trends that have fostered it, defining the telltale elements that are hallmarks of such campaigns.

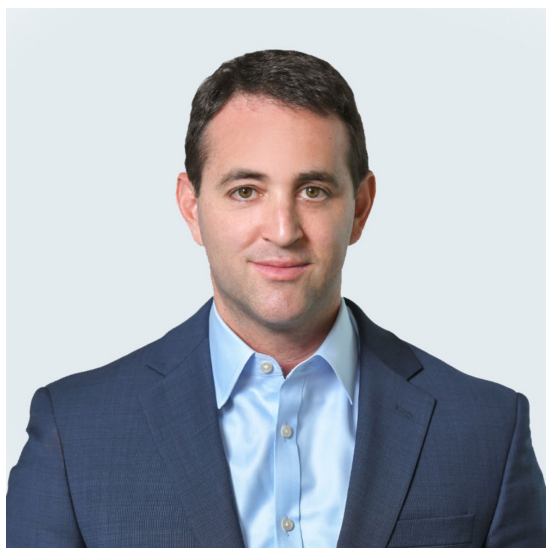
Offering a variety of fascinating case studies and interviews with some of the most well-known victims of cancel culture, Nierman and Sachs provide a playbook for rebounding from public shame, helping readers avoid becoming the latest targets of “cancel cultures,” who enjoy picking apart the remains of those left to die on the side of the Internet highway.



**THE ONLY THING WE HAVE TO CANCEL IS CANCEL CULTURE ITSELF.**

— Evan Nierman *(with appreciation to Franklin Delano Roosevelt)*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



### **EVAN NIERMAN**

is founder and CEO of Red Banyan, an international crisis management and public relations firm. He and his team have provided counsel to thousands of clients across the world, including scores who have been the targets of cancel culture attacks. Evan's writings on issues related to communications and marketing are featured in a range of leading outlets. He speaks at various conferences and universities around the world and is often called upon by media to provide insight and analysis.

### **MARK SACHS**

is senior vice president of Client Success at Red Banyan. As a member of the firm's leadership team, Mark heads the effort to scale relationship management and growth models as the agency continues expanding nationally and globally. Mark's professional career can best be described as having "range," equipping him with broad experience in strategic communications, business, science, finance, and foreign policy.



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## **PRAISE FOR “THE CANCEL CULTURE CURSE”**

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“With the publication of *The Cancel Culture Curse*, Skyhorse is continuing its proud tradition of fearlessly addressing the most controversial and critical issues of the day. A word to the wise: safeguard your future and the future of freedom of speech generally by paying attention to this book. Skyhorse takes the strongest possible stance against censorship of any kind.”

—**Tony Lyons, president and publisher, Skyhorse Publishing, Inc.**

“Policymakers in Washington and business leaders around the world: ignore this book at your own risk. *The Cancel Culture Curse* is a compelling, clear-eyed assessment of the potentially devastating consequences of life in the digital age.”

—**Jon Missner, managing partner, Stein Mitchell Beato & Missner LLP**

“*The Cancel Culture Curse* is an important book and so timely. The topics it addresses apply to every human being, since people often move far too quickly to criticize one another. Cancel culture is an extreme level of criticism that directs energy in a negative direction, instead of helping people resolve misdoings and guiding them towards leading a more uplifting and rewarding life.”

—**Dandapani, Hindu priest and author of *The Power of Unwavering Focus***

“Cancel culture constitutes a clear and present danger to our nation and American society. *The Cancel Culture Curse* makes a compelling case for better communication, as well as more compassion, forgiveness, and unity.”

—**Anthony Scaramucci, founder and managing partner, SkyBridge**

“*The Cancel Culture Curse* is exceptionally well written, showcasing how crumbling societal norms and raging online mobs are driving America away from its most cherished, foundational values.”

—**Armstrong Williams, entrepreneur, author, and national TV personality**

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## WHY THIS BOOK MATTERS

*A word from the authors*

*The Cancel Culture Curse* was written to expose the harmful practice of cancel culture, and to help put an end to it as soon as possible.

Put simply, this is a book that matters. Because if you think that cancel culture affects only large corporations or A-list celebrities then think again. In fact, it is the average person who is most at risk. Every single human being that walks the planet makes mistakes and is therefore in danger of being struck down by cancel culture. This is true for individuals from every background imaginable, and for organizations across all industries.

We in the United States used to love nothing more than a good comeback story, but in twenty-first-century America it is increasingly difficult to rebound once you take a fall. To date, cancel culture has been heavily concentrated in the United States, but should cancel culture leave our shores, the reputations and livelihoods of people all over the world could be in jeopardy.

To be clear, this is not a political book, nor is it a thinly disguised attempt to advance a partisan agenda. Our principal aim is to expose the ugly face of cancel culture, and to make the case that this hateful and harmful practice needs to stop.

We intend to illustrate how cancel culture is fundamentally un-American, running counter to the values upon which the United States was created, and which were forever enshrined by the Founders in the documents that form the basis of our government and culture.

While all persons found guilty of offenses and crimes should face consequences, we also believe that every accused American should continue to enjoy the right to due process and a presumption of innocence. Mob justice must never become a preferred, let alone acceptable, method for silencing or punishing fellow citizens with whom we disagree.

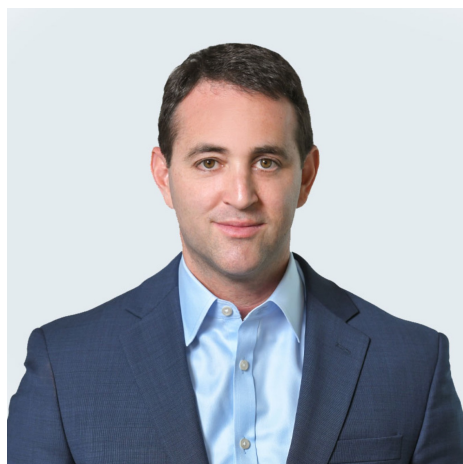
In these pages we examine the trends that have led to making cancel culture possible, looking at how cancel culture campaigns have been employed, and by whom. We will also share best practices and offer guidance for what to do if you or those you know find yourselves the target of a cancel culture mob. We call these people “cancel vultures” because they thrive upon picking apart others, shutting down debate, making all mistakes permanent, and removing the opportunity for people to atone for their sins and seek salvation.

The cancel culture curse is presently afflicting our society. But for the good of our nation, our culture, our world, and our future, we must band together to break the spell.

This book is neither intended to settle all arguments, nor to be the final word on this topic. We remain hopeful that it will spark more discussions, and ideally, contribute in some small measure to making the world a more positive and forgiving place.

Sincerely,  
Evan Nierman and Mark Sachs

## **Q&A WITH AUTHOR EVAN NIERMAN**



### **What is your view on cancel culture, and how it is affecting our society?**

Cancel culture is an insidious force in our society today. It empowers people who otherwise would have little ability to make an impact on a grand scale, focusing their attention negatively upon attacking others. Those doing the canceling assume the moral high ground, pursuing action against those whose beliefs or actions don't fall into the self-constructed parameters that they deem acceptable.

Our society has become a much less forgiving one. Knowing how and when to apologize is something with which everyone will have to grapple at some point. Some of Red Banyan's clients have lost their livelihoods as the result of cancel culture. The impacts have been financial and psychological. We have helped people who have been derided online and received death threats. In some cases, physical violence has been threatened, with mobs of people literally showing up at their door with weapons aiming to inflict harm.

### **Why does cancel culture provoke fear from public entities like brands and celebrities?**

Because it works. Corporate brands are sometimes faceless, or too big to cancel, and as a result are often far less impacted by cancel culture. Influencers and celebrities, on the other hand, are much more susceptible to cancellation, in part because they live and die by public opinion and their livelihood is based upon remaining in the public eye. When you post regularly on social media, eventually you will express something that others perceive in a negative way and then you are at risk of being attacked or canceled.

### **Do you think cancel culture is a threat to free speech?**

Cancel culture is fundamentally at odds with freedom of speech. It is an attempt to limit another person's ability to express himself/herself, which is guaranteed by the First Amendment.

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## **Q&A WITH AUTHOR EVAN NIERMAN** **(CONT'D)**

### **How do you think social media has affected what we deem as “free speech?” Does social media increase the risk of being canceled?**

Social media has proven a double-edged sword for our society. On the one hand, it brings people across the globe together in ways that are remarkable and inspirational. Harnessed in the proper way, social media can be a very powerful force for good. However, there are wide-ranging drawbacks to social media that have created a tsunami of pain and suffering. The topic of free speech is a perfect example of the duality of social media.

People now can express themselves before a truly limitless audiences of billions. They can do so instantaneously and with ease. In a sense, social media is the ultimate guarantor of freedom of speech. At the same time, social media can be weaponized against them if they do or say something to which others—often who know nothing about their true character or anything beyond what they have read about this person online or in the media—dislike. With alarming speed, mobs whose sole aim is to attack and destroy the credibility, reputations and careers of others can be brought to bear.

### **How do you approach assisting a client who is experiencing cancel culture? What techniques are used?**

Techniques for responding to cancel culture usually entail setting the record straight. All too often, people become targets of cancel culture due to miscommunication or lack of understanding the greater context behind their comments or stances. It becomes vital to explain more fully whatever has produced the ire, assertively pushing back against anything that is false.

If you make a mistake, then demonstrate accountability. If an apology is actually warranted, then issue it. However, don't make the error of apologizing unnecessarily as a tactic for relieving public pressure. Not making additional public missteps is also critical when you are in the crosshairs of a cancel culture mob. Careful consideration should be given to every word you utter publicly or post you share online. To give yourself the best opportunity to recover after coming under fire you will have to earn the trust of your audience and communicate in a way that is perceived as credible and authentic.

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## **Q&A WITH AUTHOR EVAN NIERMAN (CONT'D)**

### **Why do you feel canceling someone goes against American values?**

Canceling or censoring someone is fundamentally un-American. Cancel culture also sets an unrealistic bar for behavior. It creates a situation where people often suffer permanent consequences for infractions or mistakes. Who among us has never made a mistake? The answer is nobody; for that reason, we are all at risk of being cancelled and we should not be forced to live our lives under threat of cancellation or the expectation that we are infallible.

### **What's the difference between canceling someone and holding them accountable for their actions?**

Holding someone accountable brings consequences, but also allows that person to pay for their mistakes and ultimately be redeemed. Cancel culture aims to permanently destroy someone's brand and totally strip them of public platforms from which they can influence or communicate.

### **If an individual or brand was trying to resurrect itself after being canceled, what are the tactics and messages you'd like to see to reconsider your perception of them?**

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