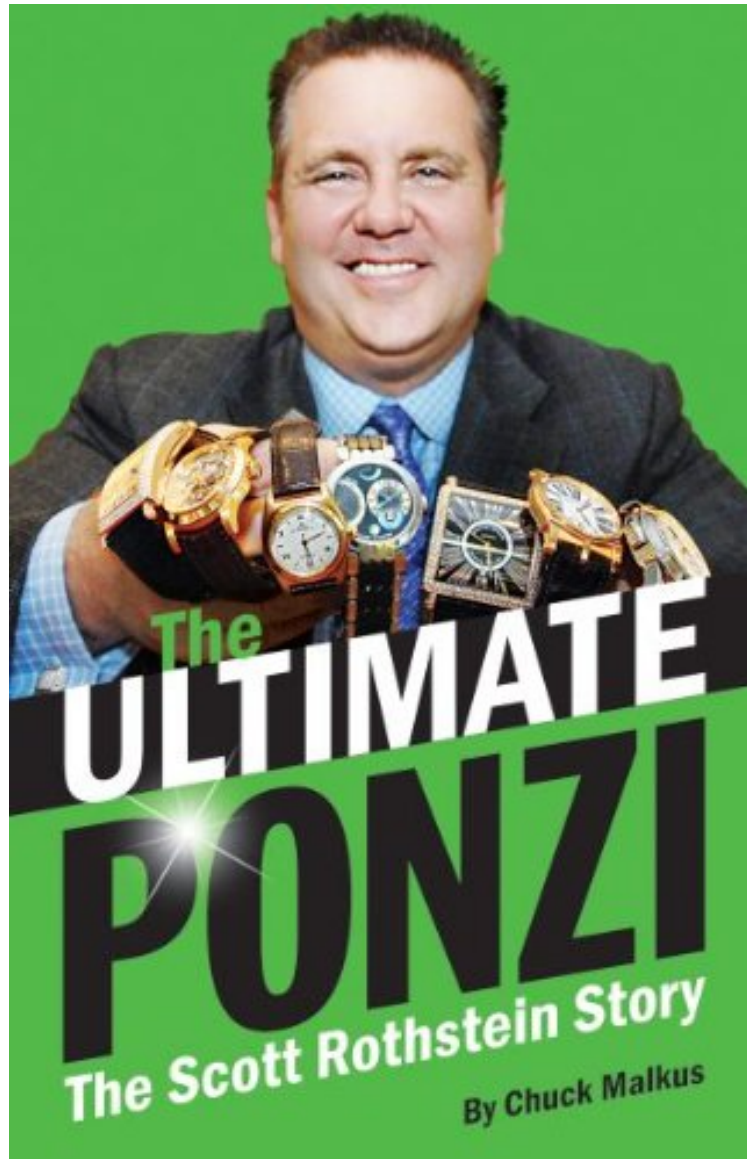


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## Ultimate Ponzi, The

*Chuck Malkus*

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**Chuck Malkus : Ultimate Ponzi, The** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ultimate Ponzi, The:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. AMAZING STORY- MUST READBy ShellyB.First of all, I have to commend Chuck Malkus, for his brilliant way of developing this narrative, to fully explore this bombastic individual, who is enigmatic, charismatic, as well as the personification of evil, for all practical purposes, that it's hard to put down, from page 1 to the last page.There are no pages that you want to skim, out of weariness, or boredom, as in many

books. Every word is skillful, and engaging, from first to last. He is the consummate storyteller, and this book was meticulously researched, that even though you can't believe what you're reading, there is confidence that he is uncovering the whole truth. Since the economic shakeup, like an earthquake, in 2008, with the tidal waves of Ponzi schemes, defined by Bernard Madoff's staggering 65 billion dollar fraud, to the equally staggering revelation of the many "Mini Madoff" schemes, that followed, Scott Rothstein falls in the middle, but, is astoundingly more memorable. His gigantic chutzpah and hubris was equivalent to all of them, including Madoff, combined. This guy, a real character, had so many balls up in the air, at once, it is breathtaking to behold how he was able to pull it off for five years. He had a spectacular trophy wife, as well as mistresses, who were not bimbos or dancers, but, had their own large careers, yet, were drawn to this middle-aged short pudgy guy, as if he was a movie star. He was larger than life, for that era. Karl Marx, defined a cycle of change, as consisting of five years. This inspired David Bowie to write the song, "Five Years", with the lyrics that could be the soundtrack of his life; "Pushing thru the market Square So many mothers sighing News had just come over, We had five years left to cry in News guy wept and told us Earth was really dying Cried so much his face was wet Then I knew he was not lying We've got five years, stuck on my eyes We've got five years, what a surprise We've got five years, my brain hurts a lot We've got five years, that's all we've got This was the span of Scott Rothstein's kingdom and glory, and he'll pay for it, with every last day of his life on this earth. For five years, he held court, was the king, was the winner, and had the world on a string. Political biggies were his friends, even the President knew his name and courted his donations, and everyone who was anyone wanted to get a piece of him, be on the team, be one of the winners, too. Even the wealthiest segment of privileged South Florida ogled his mansion, his yacht, his cars, his watches. The dizzying dazzling excess and debauchery are not for the common man, or anyone sane. Scott was pathologically warped. Maybe a psychoanalysis would reveal he's a classic sociopath, psychopath, narcissist, or megalomaniac. Or maybe he was all of these terms, combined into an engine that drove this car, more powerful than his eye-watering car collection. I live in Ft. Lauderdale, and while driving downtown, near Los Olas, I saw his Bugatti and literally parked to skip back and stare and touch it. I remember at the time, I explained to my irritated friend, that we had to park to see this car worth half a million, which my friend thought was a gross exaggeration, only to learn, that I was underestimating its value by a million. RIGHT ON THE STREET, he parked this vehicle on a city street, where nobodies like me could touch and admire it. I mean, when I first got my Toyota Celica, the second day I parked it on the street, someone keyed it. To me, it was like a barometer of his uniquely remarkable hubris to leave this car worth a million and a half dollars right out in the open, to be drooled over, admired, and envied. It was a symbol of Scott, himself, except, the car was real, and Scott was all just smoke, mirrors and illusion.... AND fraud, on a level that is enough to make anyone with a head for business have a stroke. It would be a fulltime job to keep all the numbers in the air, let alone, the lifestyle he was living, with multiple businesses, strippers, hookers, girlfriends and high maintenance wife, the endless hunt for clients and fish, politicians and celebrity friends, charity gigs and he wasn't a spring chicken, in his twenties, when you can maintain inhuman feats. But, at what point, does the illusion become real, and reality become an illusion, or when does he realize the bubble he was floating in, driving further than any bubble ever driven, faster than the Bugatti on A1A after dark, is bursting, crashing and yet, he never stopped. At the time, the Sun Sentinel broke the story, along with the ominous part of how Rothstein fled to Morocco, which irritated us all, because, no one believed he would ever be brought to justice. Most people in South Florida, were familiar with the Rothstein name, ubiquitous on local news, and event rosters, and gasped at the breadth and unbelievable scope of this massive fraud. He was like a figure from the 'Sopranos', so, everyone assumed he was the legal eagle to the South Florida mob, or shady businesses, but, legal, all the same. To realize that common gangsters have more integrity than this master illusionist thief and liar, was a revelation that was the talk of the town for months. What really blew our minds was when he returned from Morocco. . My dad obsessed over this, and I told him that he had to have returned because he crossed the wrong individuals and was safer if he went into 'Witness Protection'... It was the only explanation that made sense, but, then again, nothing about this guy made sense to the common man, because, everything he did was on a scale that was too big to perceive. I also think that he believed he had some kind of magic, even after it all collapsed, and he could wield that power, to the very end, to manipulate the contours of criminal justice and federal mandates of sentencing. He figured out that with cooperating, he could offer the government very vital information on others, rat that he was underneath it all, and he would reap the rewards of a very sweet plea deal. Just as he convinced the world to see the illusion for five years, he believed he could still master reality to suit himself, even after he was exposed. In the end, what irony, that the prosecution asked 40 years, and the judge gave him 50 years. Maybe he would be looking over his shoulder, the rest of his life, but, Morocco would have offered him asylum for the rest of his life, and instead, he blew it. Some Christians believe in a tenfold reward for tithing and charitable endeavors... In Scott's circumstance, Divine Providence provided him a tenfold increase in his sinful 5 years of gluttony, greed, criminality, carnal decadence and hedonism, pride, and destruction. There were suicides, murders, misery, and devastation left after Scott hit town for those five years, and he will die in prison, sometime in that 50 year punishment, after all. He is just a small fat guy with a smarmy snarky persona, living under a disguise in a federal prison. What goes through his head as he lays it down on that skinny 30 thread count sheets and stinky prison pillows, instead of the luxurious linen and lavish lifestyle he indulged in. His

decadent five years could rival Emperors of bygone eras, and he is now alone, left without the music, which he loved, without beautiful women, who swooned and hung on to his every word, and without anyone to admire and envy him, because, he is isolated from even his fellow convicts. That must be his worst punishment of all. Now that he has nothing left but time, I wonder if he replays those five years, in slow motion, enjoying what he got to experience, or if he truly is in hell, for what he now must endure? He wouldn't have remorse for those who were destroyed. If he didn't care about them, then, he wouldn't care about them now. Even Princess Kimberly, as he called his yacht by her moniker, is left in tatters, currently sitting in a prison cell, right now, in 2014, because she tried to get away with the money for selling that mammoth diamond ring he gave to her in love. Even his love is poisonous and ruinous. Not only is she in prison, but, the lawyer she was using to fence and launder the money got several years in prison, and was disbarred, as his reward for associating with the ultimate "rat". This incredible tale portrays his vast destruction, how his friendship, his love, his gifts to charity, his loyal partners, his employees, politicians, the Republican party, his clients, the community were all tainted and irrevocably harmed, some even died, and others utterly destroyed, by his toxic, devastating crimes. I am sure that all that torments him is the loss of admiration and validation of being Mr. Big, not those in their graves, who cry in their sleep, who were left utterly ruined, because of him. He can never atone for all his sins, and it's unlikely he would even understand this. He is one of a kind, in a unique category of evil that's hard to pigeon-hole or define, until you read the entire scope of his five years of treachery, arrogance, and his escapades brilliantly portrayed in this book. I give "Ultimate Ponzi" five well deserved stars, because, even after reading about Scott's legal troubles daily in our local papers, and being very familiar with the details, Mr. Malkus added so many unknown facts, and nuances, in technicolor, giving this despicable character the dimension to behold the enormity of his five years of madness, and the mayhem he left behind to practically everyone whom he touched. Even when he ostensibly bestowed gifts, in charity, as was the case in the Joe DiMaggio hospital for children, he only caused hurt, because the money he lavished, was stolen, and clawed back, to try to repay his other victims. Even the most innocent and humble suffered, and the hospital had to lay off vital staff to return money that he stole. Even sick children, and the dedicated nurses and hospital employees who did good every day, with their puny salaries, comparatively, were harmed by this man, who was like the Pied Piper, and the plague in one organism. Symbolically, things like these, are the only way to fathom the repercussions of this greedy, lustful, evil man's harm to a community, and the personality that drove him to pursue these toxic dreams. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. "Fraud Lauderdale" at its Peak!! By Voracious Reader Well worth the price of a download to your Kindle or as an addition to the bookshelf, this is a story of flaws - including the flaws of everyone closely involved with Scott Rothstein. The flawed story also serves as being the exclamation point for the fraud that permeated the very fabric of South Florida, and particularly that of Fort Lauderdale, carried out through multiple generations, finally reaching its zenith and instant collapse at the end of the first decade of the new millennium. Fittingly, that exclamation point was perpetuated from the symbol of Fort Lauderdale's success, from Scott Rothstein's offices of RRA and the boomtown's tallest structure, the Bank of America building, an edifice no longer symbolizing burgeoning industry and enterprise, but instead a monument to greed, avarice, and scandal. And like a giant red star that grows very big, burns very fast, then explodes in a supernova leaving a core that collapses into itself, creating a black hole, which then sucks in everything around it, so too did Scott Rothstein - his domain being the easy pickings of Las Olas Boulevard. In his book, which is the result of significant research, Chuck Malkus has captured most aspects of the sad life cycle of this particular one-time star, now a black hole, which from time to time pops up from witness protection and continues to feed on what's left in the aftermath of his havoc-wreaking implosion. The sorry saga of Scott Rothstein is very complex, however with THE ULTIMATE PONZI Chuck Malkus is able to touch on the most entertaining aspects of Rothstein's rise and fall, particularly his over-the-top garish behavior, as well as deliver a good sense of the scheme, and do so within a fast paced 250 pages. When pondering the mind of Rothstein one can't help but wonder, "What was he thinking?" Unfortunately the same could be said of the numerous "sophisticated" investors that Rothstein so easily duped. The hedge fund money that entered into the mix can be reasoned as the result of investors fleeing the collapsing real estate market, and the decline of traditional funds, which towards the end served as the best conduit for Scott Rothstein's scheme, creating a floodgate of money Rothstein could place in the void of money already spent. That money poured in once Levin and Bekkedam naively opened up their hedge funds and client's wallets to the deal. Yet, why would supposedly shrewd money managers in their own right do it, as well as so many others? The author does a great job in giving the reader that insight and answering the question of the day. It appears that in many cases the trusted advisor that the wealthy would refer to when conducting due diligence on large investments was none other than either RRA or Rothstein himself. No additional opinion was needed. Rothstein prayed upon the vulnerable in all cases, his hunting ground not having any boundaries, be it business, sports, entertainment, legal, government, political, personal, or even religion. In the end, as the book explains, the reader understands that Rothstein succeeded in corrupting and ripping off mostly those that were also weak in character and self-esteem. Rothstein was an expert at identifying his target's vulnerabilities and capitalizing on the further corruption of those weaknesses. He did that in all of his relationships, professional and personal. Those of strong character saw the red flags and avoided being sucked into the black hole emanating from the Bank of America building, one that grew exponentially over a five-year period. The author does

tell us about the real victims as well. There were those unfortunate souls however, those average, hard working folks, whose deserved settlements were pilfered by Rothstein, stolen without a second thought from RRA's escrow accounts in order to feed his greed. Those unfortunates, who fortunately are relatively few, are the ultimate victims of the "Ultimate Ponzi." 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Very well written By Douglas W. Hay Chuck Malkus did a masterful job setting the stage for a cast of characters ruled by the ultimate emotion..... greed. I was fascinated how so many intelligent self made business people trusted a overly charismatic lawyer promising the moon. As an investor, I always like to learn from other people's mistakes. I toast the author for exposing the story, the perpetrator and helping us learn how to avoid these investment schemes. Every investor and business person should read this book.

The story of Scott Rothstein's \$1.4 billion Ponzi scheme. Lawyer Scott Rothstein, in a breathtakingly ambitious Ponzi scheme, stole \$1.4

"Through his largesse, Rothstein made many "friends" among local politicians, law enforcement, and even former Florida governor Charles Crist. Such a high profile, as described in great detail in the fascinating book, The Ultimate Ponzi, by Chuck Malkus, served Rothstein well in attracting clients to his investment scheme, which involved the sale of investments that didn't really exist." -- The Street "If ever there were fertile ground for a spellbinding story about hitting the heights of fortune and then descending into the depths of deprivation, it would have to be the saga of Scott W. Rothstein and his \$1.4 billion Ponzi scheme." -- Financial Advisor Magazine From the Inside Flap In what became one of the most ruthless Ponzi schemes in United States history, Fort Lauderdale attorney Scott Rothstein stole \$1.4 billion to finance his opulent lifestyle. In this story of betrayal, greed, corruption, murder, sex, and suicide, no one is innocent. From Rothstein's humble beginnings in the Bronx through his sudden rise to become one of the most powerful men in Florida, the full story has not been told until now. An employment lawyer whose wealth and status seemed to come from nowhere, Rothstein infiltrated the communities of South Florida with charm and manipulation. With unexpected flamboyance, he bought his way into society and took advantage of charitable organizations and prominent individuals. Using methods reminiscent of a criminal kingpin, Rothstein corrupted businessmen and investors. During the later months of 2009, South Florida learned of the scandal that involved the area's top philanthropist. The man who built Fort Lauderdale's richest law firm was far from generous—he was a destructive con artist who plundered investor accounts to build his own fortune. Chronicled here are the uncovered truths behind the scam that deceived hundreds, accompanied by photographs and input from community members and psychologists on the character of the Sunshine State villain. Despite Rothstein's lavish lifestyle, he was unable to escape judgment both from the law and from the society he used to manipulate. Chuck Malkus, a nationally recognized public relations executive and crisis communications expert, is the president of Malkus Communications Group. He has contributed columns to publications such as the South Florida Sun Sentinel, the South Dade News Leader, and CityView Magazine and was featured as an expert discussing Scott Rothstein's Ponzi scheme on CNBC's American Greed. A community advocate, Malkus was inspired to write this story to shed light on the true Rothstein, who took advantage of hospitals, children's charities, and thousands of citizens. Since the 1980s, Malkus has served on the board of directors for numerous South Florida organizations, including the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, the American Red Cross, and Neighbors 4 Neighbors, of which he was a founding co-chairman. His clients include the Broadway-style Havana Night Club-The Show, Advanced Green Technologies, and several law firms. Malkus also serves as a speaker on a variety of topics, including media training and crisis communications. He lives in sunny Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with his wife, Sandra. From the Back Cover "Scott Rothstein's flashy forays into the worlds of sex, law, politics and charities would even make Bernie Madoff blush." -Kevin Gale, editor, South Florida Business Journal "From his bird's-eye view, Chuck Malkus details Fort Lauderdale con man Scott Rothstein's vulgar vanities in The Ultimate Ponzi—and reveals the piggish personality behind Florida's largest investment swindle." -Jay Weaver, Miami Herald "A fresh look at a riveting downward spiral. As is spelled out: the warning signs were ignored which lead to a spectacular crash. In The Ultimate Ponzi Chuck Malkus pulls back the curtains on Fort Lauderdale's own Bernie Madoff." -Kerry Sanders, NBC News, Miami Bureau Fort Lauderdale attorney Scott Rothstein shocked his community when his attempt to gain status and fortune became his ultimate downfall. The full story of the \$1.4 billion Ponzi scheme is told here for the first time. From Rothstein's water-front home and lavish watches to his fifty-year sentence in federal prison, the South Florida socialite and philanthropist is now the people's very own villain. With the help of corrupt politicians, public officers, and judges, the manipulative and destructive Rothstein took advantage of investors, charitable organizations, government officials, and fellow lawyers, resulting in theft, murder, seduction, and suicide. Through research, interviews with community members and psychologists, and first-hand accounts, the truths of Rothstein's greed and deceit are detailed here. Chuck Malkus, an accomplished public relations executive, is the president of Malkus Communications Group. He has contributed articles to various publications and has appeared on CNBC's American Greed as an expert on the Rothstein scam. He resides in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, with his wife,

Sandra.