



Movie Review: Glenn Beck's "Broke"

Last night, conservative pundit Glenn Beck regaled audiences across the country in his live performance of *Broke: Restarting the Engine of America* in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, which was streamed to a limited selection of movie theaters. Meant to both promote and explain the content of Beck's newest best-selling nonfiction book *Broke: The Plan to Restore America's Trust, Truth, and Treasure*, the performance was classic Beck: educational, humorous, passionate, and intimidating. If you missed out on yesterday's performance, fear not, for an encore performance is scheduled in movie theaters next Wednesday, December 8.



The first half of Beck's performance was comprised of overwhelming data. With guest David Buckner, professor of organizational leadership at Columbia University, and the man notorious for fainting on an episode of Beck's show earlier this year, Beck outlined the stark comparisons between the United States and the European Union. The daunting conclusion was that the United States is in fact in worse shape. Here's how:

The most troublesome economy plaguing the EU right now is Greece, whose 27th largest economy in the world currently has a \$330 billion GDP.

By comparison, America's Greece is California, whose economy is the 8th largest in the world. California's GDP is \$1.4 trillion.

Likewise, according to Buckner, the member states with the direst economic conditions in the EU are Greece, Spain, and Portugal, whose deficits total \$1.96 trillion.

In the United States, however, the states currently in the worst economic conditions are New Jersey (though Beck credited Governor Chris Christie for his fiscally conservative efforts — an aside that drew applause from the audience), Illinois, New York, and California, all of which have deficits that total \$4 trillion.

To boot, member states in the European Union have begun to tackle their economic woes by implementing austerity measures.

America? Not so much.

Beck and Buckner go on to highlight graphs and charts with truly frightening figures that fully articulate the trouble in which the United States finds itself, perhaps most of all that the interest rates on the federal debt alone total \$32 billion per month.

One interesting chart shows that the cost of Social Security and Medicare will top that of the overall economies of Italy, Spain, Russia, Turkey, Sweden, and Switzerland.



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on December 3, 2010

Beck's ultimate goal was to prove that America is truly BROKE.

The question remained, do we intend to fix it, and if so, do we want to do so without fundamentally changing our country?

Beck remarked, "People get angry at me for saying this, but I am not married to the Constitution. If you can show me something better than it, I'll take it."

However, he quickly added,

But there has never been anything better than the concept that all men are created equal. That they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights. That those rights of life and liberty are guaranteed by our government so that we have the freedom to pursue our own happiness!

Drawing a standing ovation from both the live audience and the movie theatergoers, Beck used the moment to emphasize the importance of saving our republic. In perhaps one of the most memorable moments of the performance, he revealed the "hockey stick" chart that shows the boom in the world's economic growth that coincides completely with the inception of the United States and its free market system that, coupled with the Constitution, has created prosperity unknown to the world before that time. And Beck reveals the chart in the most unique way.

Today, however, America faces struggles that threaten the very republic.

Comparing the United States to a classic American car, Beck ran with the metaphor the entire way through. America's woes, like the engine of the Mustang, have been sealed, so that the individual no longer has control over how it is fixed without acquiring help from the "experts." But as noted by Beck, the "experts" are the ones who got us into this mess in the first place.

So what is the solution? With passionate enthusiasm, Beck offered the following answers:

One, Americans must accept what is coming. Take our lumps now so that future generations do not have to do it. Let go of the things we feel entitled to, like Medicare, Social Security, healthcare, etc. Children are America's future.... inheritors of our debt.

Two, we must have "firm reliance on Divine Providence" and "mutually pledge our lives, fortunes, and sacred honor" to protecting our republic.

To put it simply, Find God, give thanks for the wealth bestowed upon us as Americans, and start anew.

Not all of the performance was somber and frightening, however. One need not look far to find Beck's unique brand of humor, particularly when he poked fun at the First Lady's nutrition agenda. Likewise, when he was describing China's economy, which has been dubbed "State Capitalism," Beck explained that it is virtually National Socialism like that of the Nazis. But he pointed out, "One thing Progressives have is a thesaurus. The ideas are all the same. All that changes are the names."

Overall, *Broke* highlights the changes in Glenn Beck over the past few years. In his 2008 performance in *Unelectable*, for example, he was mostly comical and provided limited data, even though his conservatism was evident.

Just two years later, Beck's demeanor reflects the fear he harbors for the future of the nation. His performance yesterday was a personification of Edward Munch's famous painting, *The Scream*. He appeared as one of the few who are truly aware of what is coming, warning those around him, practically screaming from the rafters, but wholly ignored and criticized, with the exception of his loyal



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audience.

Fortunately, that audience is now 10 percent of the overall population and will likely continue to grow.

Beck optimistically declared, "Those 10 percent will be the leaders when things begin to crumble around us. Together, we can help restore this nation like a classic American car and make it run better than before."

The show was inspiring and entertaining, but at \$20 a ticket around the holidays, some may want to consider waiting until it is released on video. However, if you can spare the money, I recommend you go and take your skeptical friends and family members with you. Confronted by such harsh data, passionate patriotism, and optimism in the strength of the American people, I feel confident that those skeptics may leave the theater with an entirely different perspective.



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