

Patton Oswalt on the New Billionaire Class: "No One Gets Anything But Me."

The actor and comedian diagnoses the "perfectly happy sociopaths" running society in a recent Books That Changed My Life interview.

LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 4, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On the latest episode of Books That Changed My Life, host Chris "Bulldog" Collins sat down with actor and comedian Patton Oswalt to discuss Ruby Cowing's short story collection *This Paradise* — a conversation that broadened into Oswalt's account of a new class of "billionaire, trillionaire" oligarchs whose stated vision is that "no one gets anything but me."



Patton Oswalt.

Oswalt, whose new stand-up special *Tea and Scotch* is currently on YouTube, discovered *This Paradise* through a Hingston & Olsen short story advent calendar. One of Cowing's stories, "Odon Till," sent him chasing everything else she'd written, which led him to the Boiler House Press collection. He describes himself as an evangelist for the collection, buying and giving away as many copies as he can.

Oswalt's interest in the work centers on questions of power and creativity in the AI era. He describes a period when he was, in his own words, "a slave to the brain rot and the slop and the swiping all night, all day," until Cowing's book pulled him back to reading.

From there, the conversation turns to what Oswalt calls "a new power announcing itself as power that does not care" — not the robber barons who at least attempted to balance the ledger by funding hospitals and libraries, but "perfectly happy sociopaths" who "get 10 hours of sleep at night" and "don't have stomach ulcers." The new ethos, he argues, is "I'm taking stuff out of the world and giving nothing back — that's how strong I am."

Cowing's stories give that argument its texture. Oswalt walks Collins through three: "The Ground Is Considerably Distorted," in which a news event gets progressively obscured by texts, social media, and pundits running along the margins of the page; "Eliminate Toxins and Increase Blood Flow," a four-page story set in a massage parlor that ends with a gruesome and somewhat comic murder; and "Flamingo Land," a near-future dystopia in which British families "earn" social welfare by maintaining their weights according to "the formula." The title story, "This Paradise," follows a family of wealthy British climate refugees, and, as Oswalt observes, closes on the recognition that "you're not necessarily the king of it anymore."

BOOKS THAT CHANGED MY LIFE

Books That Changed My Life.

One moment sums up Oswalt's read: a Q&A he attended a year ago, at which a vice president of "one of the big AI companies, maybe the biggest one" was asked what people should do about AI replacing their jobs. The executive's answer: "If it was me, I'd buy a park. People are going to want to go to parks."

Oswalt finds the VP's response emblematic of the new billionaire class's extractive logic:

"That's the funniest answer I've ever heard. Buy nature."

Watch the full episode [HERE](#).

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