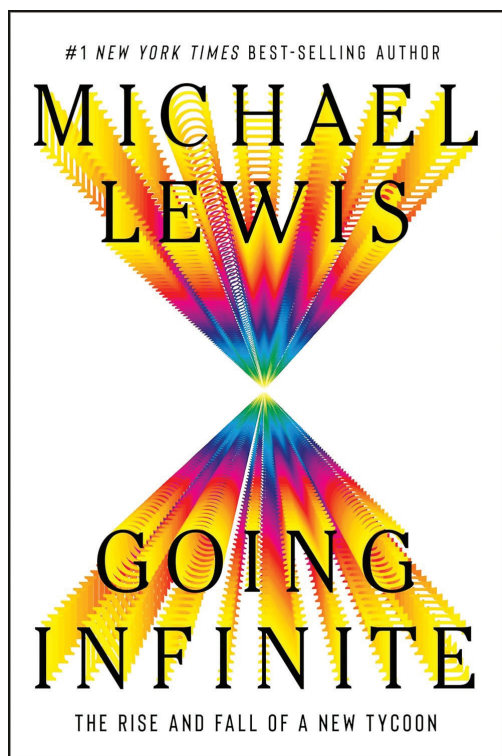


Going Infinite: The Rise and Fall of Sam Bankman-Fried by Michael Lewis



Going Infinite: The Rise and Fall of a New Tycoon is a 2023 book by Michael Lewis about Sam Bankman-Fried, a fraudster who founded the failed cryptocurrency exchange FTX. The book's publication date, October 3, 2023, coincided with the beginning of Bankman-Fried's trial on seven counts of fraud and money laundering.

The book is an intimate account of Bankman-Fried's character and relationships, and stems from hundreds of interviews and unparalleled access that continued even after FTX collapsed in 2022. The book claims that \$8 billion prosecutors say was lost by FTX may not have actually been stolen, and alleges that Bankman-Fried unsuccessfully sought to bribe Donald Trump to not run again for president.

Going Infinite has been criticized for being excessively credulous and overly sympathetic to Bankman-Fried, and lacking in insight despite the author's access. Lewis has rejected the criticism.

Los Angeles Times columnist Michael Hiltzik called the book "a textbook on the imperative need to approach a subject with a healthy helping of skepticism." Lewis, he asserts, "doesn't exercise any." He asserts that a "torrent of nonsense" from Bankman-Fried in 2022 explaining FTX's losses "didn't snow many people who knew anything about finance and weren't angling for a piece of his action", but that "it sure seems to have snowed the hell out of Michael Lewis."

New York Times book critic Jennifer Szalai asserted that reading this "strange new book", readers "soon get the sense that Lewis felt unusually flummoxed by his material." She describes Lewis as "stubbornly credulous", writing that he initially expected to write a favorable "unsung hero" story as he had so often in the past, that "zombie traces" of that are in the book, but that he was taken by surprise by FTX's collapse. Szalai contends that Lewis' assertion that there were no signs "anything was amiss" in October 2022 is contradicted by an April 2022 interview in which Bankman-Fried "all but admitted that the cryptocurrency industry — the linchpin of the Bankman-Fried edifice — was like a Ponzi scheme. She describes his intimate access to Bankman-Fried after the collapse as "a front-row seat — from which he could apparently see nothing."

Writing in the **Los Angeles Times**, book critic Julia M. Klein called the book "well-timed, if unsatisfyingly convoluted." She writes that the book is not for those seeking a "definitive take" on Bankman-Fried's guilt or innocence, that it is "labyrinthine and downright arcane", and does not do an adequate job of explaining the intricacies of cryptocurrencies. Lewis, she writes, "throws up his hands" at the prospect of describing bitcoin. She asserts that while there are fascinating passages, exactly "how this bizarre child-man was able to seduce so many people into following him around the world into unregulated, unhinged and possibly illegal enterprises remains a mystery.

James Ledbetter writes in **The Washington Post** that the description of the alleged Trump bribery plan is unsatisfying, leaving the reader wanting to know more, and that "at moments Lewis seems so willing to let Bankman-Fried off the hook, even after Bankman-Fried was charged with fraud and money-laundering." He writes that Lewis "spends much of the end of the book second-guessing the choices and interpretations made by John Ray, the CEO appointed to run FTX after it went bankrupt, rather than drill down into the company's fraud (admittedly, no easy task)."