



**JON BOORSTIN** is an Oscar-nominated filmmaker and the author of *The Newsboys' Lodging-House: or The Confessions of William James*, winner of the New York Society Library Award for Historical Fiction. He lives and writes in Los Angeles. Visit [jonboorstin.com](http://jonboorstin.com) for more information.

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What does it mean to be an American? Historian Daniel J. Boorstin, one of the most important public intellectuals of the twentieth century, spent a lifetime pondering that question. In his revelatory book *The American*, Boorstin's son Jon, a novelist and Oscar-nominated filmmaker, probes this question to tell the biographical story his father never told: a chronicle of family, racial conflict, and immigrant Jewish life in twentieth century America.

Why did Boorstin—the 1974 winner of the Pulitzer Prize for *The Americans: The Democratic Experience*—write so little about himself? To answer that question, Jon Boorstin reaches back to the beginning of the 20th century and introduces readers to his immigrant grandfather, would-be southern gentleman Sam Boorstin, the youngest lawyer in Georgia's history. When Sam's good friend Leo Frank is lynched in a notorious antisemitic incident, Sam moves his family to boomtown Tulsa, where Daniel is raised in the shadow of the infamous Tulsa Massacre of 1921. With sympathy tempered by a contemporary sensibility, Jon Boorstin shows how Sam's response to these events shaped Daniel's trademark optimism. Jon also explores his father's enduring friendship with the distinguished Black historian John Hope Franklin, a fellow Tulsan, both unwavering proponents of the American Dream in the face of extraordinary prejudice.

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