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After the Music Stopped

Alan Blinder

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After the Music Stopped

Alan Blinder

Summary

With bracing clarity, Blinder shows us how the U.S. financial system, which had grown far too complex for its own good—and too unregulated for the public good—experienced a perfect storm beginning in 2007. Things started unraveling when the much-chronicled housing bubble burst, but the ensuing implosion of what Blinder calls the “bond bubble” was larger and more devastating. Some people think of the financial industry as a sideshow with little relevance to the real economy—where the jobs, factories, and shops are. But finance is more like the circulatory system of the economic body: if the blood stops flowing, the body goes into cardiac arrest. When America’s financial structure crumbled, the damage proved to be not only deep, but wide. It took the crisis for the world to discover, to its horror, just how truly interconnected—and fragile—the global financial system is. Some observers argue that large global forces were the major culprits of the crisis. Blinder disagrees, arguing that the problem started in the U.S. and was pushed abroad, as complex, opaque, and overrated investment products were exported to a hungry world, which was nearly poisoned by them.

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