

FT/Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year

Biographies and economics dominate the shortlist

Andrew Hill looks at the six finalists for this year's business book award

Heavyweight biographies of two towering figures of global business and economics are among the six finalists for this year's Financial Times and Goldman Sachs Business Book of the Year Award.

The seven judges chose the shortlist - including *Volcker*, William Silber's newly published life of Paul Volcker, the former Federal Reserve chairman, and *Steve Jobs*, Walter Isaacson's account of the life and work of the late chief executive of Apple - from 17 longlisted titles. Lionel Barber, the FT's editor, called it "the strongest list in terms of

quality" since the prize was launched in 2005.

The judges will select the winner on November 1, and the £30,000 prize will be presented at a dinner in New York that evening to the book that "provides the most compelling and enjoyable insight into

modern business issues". Authors of each of the five other finalists will receive £10,000.

The 262 entries for this year's award included many books about the US economy, timed to appear before the presidential election. But the shortlist

reflects a broader range of topics of global relevance.

The finalists include *The Hour Between Dog and Wolf*, John Coates' analysis of the biology of financial traders. Vindi Banga, a partner with private equity firm Clayton Dubilier & Rice and one of the judges,

described it as an "important book" that looks "at the only business situation where response times have to be as quick as in war or sport".

The judges also drew attention to *Why Nations Fail* by Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson, which traces the roots of power and prosperity to the nature of economic and political institutions. Shriti Vadera, former UK minister and an adviser to multinationals, praised the book for its "great sweep of politics and economics and history".

In a strong year for in-depth investigations of companies, journalist Steve Coll's *Private Empire*, which dissects the power base of ExxonMobil, the US oil and gas company, earned a place on the shortlist. Jorma Ollila, who brought his insight as chairman of Royal Dutch Shell to the judging table,

said the book "captures the DNA of the company marvellously well".

Rounding out the list is *What Money Can't Buy*, Michael Sandel's exploration of the moral limits of markets. Lynda Gratton, professor at London Business School, said it was a "thought-provoking antidote" to the usual market-driven discussion of business and the economy.

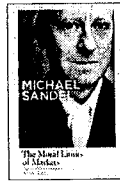
The shortlist



● *The Hour Between Dog and Wolf: Risk-taking, Gut Feelings and the Biology of Boom and Bust* By John Coates



● *Steve Jobs: The Exclusive Biography* By Walter Isaacson



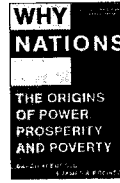
● *What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits of Markets* By Michael Sandel



● *Private Empire: ExxonMobil and American Power* By Steve Coll



● *Volcker: The Triumph of Persistence* By William Silber



● *Why Nations Fail: The Origins of Power, Prosperity and Poverty* By Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson

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For more information about this year's award and details of previous winners, please visit:

www.ft.com/bookaward

