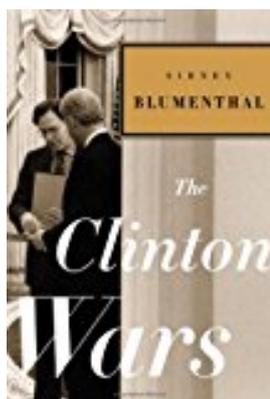


[PDF] The Clinton Wars

Sidney Blumenthal - pdf download free book



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Description:

The title of journalist turned-embattled-White House aide Sidney Blumenthal's memoir/history of his tumultuous years inside the Clinton presidency is both literal and figurative, if something of an understatement; "apocalypse" would seem more to the point. Erudite and fiercely unapologetic, Blumenthal belatedly provides the overwrought saga's protagonists what they so often publicly lacked in its historical context: passionate advocacy and precious perspective. No mere presidential history, the battles chronicled here transcend politics as usual, bitter partisan campaigns whose roots Blumenthal forcefully argues extend beneath lingering class and generational resentments into the darkest heart of America's Southern racist past. Hillary Clinton's accusations of a "vast right-

wing conspiracy" garnered cynical chuckles in its heyday; Blumenthal (whose own teasing White House nickname was "Grassy Knoll") merely cuts its treachery down to size, documenting the usual suspects, dates, and places with amply footnoted vengeance. There's irony to burn, from unexpected early Clinton supporters (former GOP standard bearer Barry Goldwater) and the blatant moral hypocrisy of his Congressional accusers to the Supreme Court's sole dissenting voice in arguments to reinstate the Special Prosecutor statute, Justice Scalia (who presciently warned it could easily become the tool of political witch hunts), and the heretical notion that the Clintons may have been the *least* cynical players in the entire drama; they certainly seem it's most tragically human. It's hardly surprising that much of the Washington news establishment has attacked Blumenthal's tome with equal ferocity; in Blumenthal's telling, the D.C. press corps that zealously safeguarded democracy during Watergate had by the advent of Clinton devolved into an insular *faux* aristocracy resentful of perceived carpetbaggers (especially from Arkansas) and suckers for any politically-motivated leak, rumor, or innuendo that might give them a leg up on the competition. The media's inept handling of the story is even more ironic considering much of what Blumenthal does here derives from the simple advice Watergate informer "Deep Throat" gave reporters during that crisis: "Follow the money." --*Jerry McCulley*

From Publishers Weekly Blumenthal's 800-page gorilla of a book is the former Clinton adviser's indictment of his, and his boss's, pursuers: Republicans in Congress, Kenneth Starr and his minions and the journalists he says were their patsies. It's also a defense of his own role in the Clinton scandals and a loyal account of Clinton's presidency as a highly successful one dedicated to progressive values. The heart of the book is an often tediously detailed account of the Whitewater investigation, the Lewinsky scandal and the impeachment, in which his own role was notable--accused of smearing the opposition, he was known to the anti-Clintonites as "Sid Vicious" and was the only presidential aide called to a deposition at the Senate impeachment hearings (which culminate in a hilarious "Alice in Wonderland" q&a session). The scandals are sandwiched between drier, partisan accounts of Clinton's policies and actions both before and after impeachment, but with only rare glimpses of Clinton the man. Blumenthal argues that there was "an Italianate conspiracy" arrayed against Clinton, "an intricate, covert, amoral operation bent on power," funded by Richard Mellon Scaife and fronted by a ruthlessly vindictive Starr. But Blumenthal is most damning about his onetime colleagues in the press (he wrote for the New Republic and the Washington Post); journalists admitted to him, he says, that they couldn't criticize Starr because they needed leaks from his staff for their stories. Blumenthal paints nasty portraits of Matt Drudge (who accused him of wife-beating), the late Michael Kelly (who here displays an irrational hatred of him) and Christopher Hitchens ("capable of doing harm without conscience or regret"). Often fascinating and undoubtedly controversial, Blumenthal's book will receive much media attention, but most readers will wish it were a whole lot shorter.

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