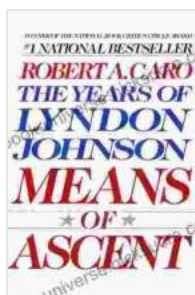


The Years of Lyndon Johnson: The Passage of Power

Lyndon Johnson was a complex and contradictory figure who left an indelible mark on American history. He was a master of politics, a skilled legislator, and a visionary leader. But he was also a ruthless operator, a consummate dealmaker, and a man driven by an insatiable ambition.

Johnson's presidency was a time of great change and upheaval. He came to office in the wake of John F. Kennedy's assassination, and he inherited a nation that was deeply divided by the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. Johnson's Great Society programs were ambitious attempts to address these challenges, but they ultimately proved to be too costly and too divisive.



Means of Ascent: The Years of Lyndon Johnson II

by Robert A. Caro

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Johnson's legacy is a mixed one. He is credited with passing some of the most important social legislation in American history, including the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. But he is also blamed for escalating the Vietnam War and for presiding over a period of social unrest and political turmoil.

The Rise to Power

Lyndon Johnson was born in 1908 in Stonewall, Texas. He was the eldest of five children, and his family was poor. Johnson's father was a farmer and a schoolteacher, and his mother was a devout Baptist. Johnson was a bright and ambitious child, and he excelled in school. He attended Southwest Texas State Teachers College, where he studied history and political science. After graduating from college, Johnson taught high school for a few years before entering politics.

Johnson's political career began in 1937, when he was elected to the U.S. House of Representatives. He quickly rose through the ranks, and in 1948 he was elected to the U.S. Senate. Johnson served as Senate Majority Leader from 1955 to 1961, and he was a close ally of President John F. Kennedy.

When Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, Johnson became president. He inherited a nation that was deeply divided by the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement. Johnson's Great Society programs were ambitious attempts to address these challenges, but they ultimately proved to be too costly and too divisive.

The Great Society

The Great Society was a series of domestic programs that were enacted by Lyndon Johnson during his presidency. The programs were designed to address a wide range of social issues, including poverty, education, health care, and civil rights. Some of the most important Great Society programs included:

- The Civil Rights Act of 1964
- The Voting Rights Act of 1965
- Medicare
- Medicaid
- Head Start
- The War on Poverty

The Great Society programs were ambitious and far-reaching, and they had a significant impact on American society. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 were landmark pieces of legislation that helped to end segregation and discrimination in the United States.

Medicare and Medicaid provided health insurance to millions of Americans who could not afford it. Head Start provided early childhood education to disadvantaged children. And the War on Poverty was a massive effort to combat poverty in the United States.

However, the Great Society programs were also expensive, and they proved to be too divisive. The Vietnam War drained the federal budget, and the civil rights movement continued to divide the nation. By the end of Johnson's presidency, the Great Society was in shambles.

The Vietnam War

The Vietnam War was a major turning point in Lyndon Johnson's presidency. Johnson initially supported the war, but as the war dragged on, he became increasingly disillusioned. He began to doubt the war's prospects for success, and he worried about the growing cost in American lives. In 1968, Johnson announced that he would not seek re-election, and he began to withdraw American troops from Vietnam.

The Vietnam War had a profound impact on American society. It divided the nation, it cost the lives of thousands of American soldiers, and it damaged the reputation of the United States around the world. The war also led to Johnson's downfall, and it helped to shape his legacy as president.

The Legacy of Lyndon Johnson

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Johnson's legacy is still being debated today. Some historians argue that he was a great president who made significant progress on important social issues. Others argue that he was a flawed leader who made serious mistakes, particularly in Vietnam. Ultimately, Johnson's legacy will be shaped by the passage of time and the ongoing debate about his presidency.

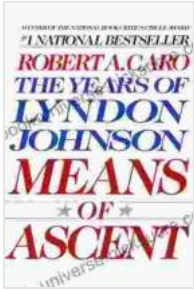
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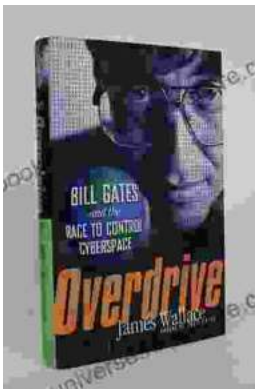
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