

# Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America

By Rick Perlstein

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**Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America** By Rick Perlstein

Told with urgency and sharp political insight, *Nixonland* recaptures America's turbulent 1960s and early 1970s and reveals how Richard Nixon rose from the political grave to seize and hold the presidency.

Perlstein's epic account begins in the blood and fire of the 1965 Watts riots, nine months after Lyndon Johnson's historic landslide victory over Barry Goldwater appeared to herald a permanent liberal consensus in the United States. Yet the next year, scores of liberals were tossed out of Congress, America was more divided than ever, and a disgraced politician was on his way to a shocking comeback: Richard Nixon.

Between 1965 and 1972, America experienced no less than a second civil war. Out of its ashes, the political world we know now was born. It was the era not only of Nixon, Johnson, Spiro Agnew, Hubert H. Humphrey, George McGovern, Richard J. Daley, and George Wallace but Abbie Hoffman, Ronald Reagan, Angela Davis, Ted Kennedy, Charles Manson, John Lindsay, and Jane Fonda. There are tantalizing glimpses of Jimmy Carter, George H. W. Bush, Jesse Jackson, John Kerry, and even of two ambitious young men named Karl Rove and William Clinton -- and a not so ambitious young man named George W. Bush.

Cataclysms tell the story of *Nixonland*:

-Angry blacks burning down their neighborhoods in cities across the land as white suburbanites defend home and hearth with shotguns


-The student insurgency over the Vietnam War, the assassinations of Robert F. Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and the riots at the 1968 Democratic National Convention

-The fissuring of the Democratic Party into warring factions manipulated by the "dirty tricks" of Nixon and his Committee to Re-Elect the President

-Richard Nixon pledging a new dawn of national unity, governing more divisively than any president before him, then directing a criminal conspiracy, the Watergate cover-up, from the Oval Office

Then, in November 1972, Nixon, harvesting the bitterness and resentment born of America's turmoil, was reelected in a landslide even bigger than Johnson's 1964 victory, not only setting the stage for his dramatic 1974 resignation but defining the terms of the ideological divide that characterizes America today.

Filled with prodigious research and driven by a powerful narrative, Rick Perlstein's magisterial account of how America divided confirms his place as one of our country's most celebrated historians.

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## **Editorial Review**

Amazon.com Review

**Amazon Best of the Month, May 2008:** How did we go from Lyndon Johnson's landslide Democratic victory in 1964 to Richard Nixon's equally lopsided Republican reelection only eight years later? The years in between were among the most chaotic in American history, with an endless and unpopular war, riots, assassinations, social upheaval, Southern resistance, protests both peaceful and armed, and a "Silent Majority" that twice elected the central figure of the age, a brilliant politician who relished the battles of the day but ended them in disgrace. In *Nixonland* Rick Perlstein tells a more familiar story than the one he unearthed in his influential previous book, *Before the Storm*, which argued that the stunning success of modern conservatism was founded in Goldwater's massive 1964 defeat. But he makes it fresh and relentlessly compelling, with obsessive original research and a gleefully slashing style--equal parts Walter Winchell and Hunter S. Thompson--that's true to the times. Perlstein is well known as a writer on the left, but his historian's empathies are intense and unpredictable: he convincingly channels the resentment and rage on both sides of the battle lines and lets neither Nixon's cynicism nor the naivete of liberals like New York mayor John Lindsay off the hook. And while election-year readers will be reminded of how much tamer our times are, they'll also find that the echoes of the era, and its persistent national divisions, still ring loud and clear. --Tom Nissley

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Perlstein, winner of a Los Angeles Times Book Prize for *Before the Storm: Barry Goldwater and the Unmaking of the American Consensus*, provides a compelling account of Richard Nixon as a masterful harvester of negative energy, turning the turmoil of the 1960s into a ladder to political notoriety. Perlstein's key narrative begins at about the time of the Watts riots, in the shadow of Lyndon Johnson's overwhelming 1964 victory at the polls against Goldwater, which left America's conservative movement broken. Through shrewdly selected anecdotes, Perlstein demonstrates the many ways Nixon used riots, anti-Vietnam War protests, the drug culture and other displays of unrest as an easy relief against which to frame his pitch for his narrow win of 1968 and landslide victory of 1972. Nixon spoke of solid, old-fashioned American values, law and order and respect for the traditional hierarchy. In this way, says Perlstein, Nixon created a new dividing line in the rhetoric of American political life that remains with us today. At the same time, Perlstein illuminates the many demons that haunted Nixon, especially how he came to view his political adversaries as enemies of both himself and the nation and brought about his own downfall. 16 pages of b&w photos. (May)

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Review

"A richly detailed descent into the inferno -- that is, the years when Richard Milhous Nixon, 'a serial collector of resentments,' ruled the land." -- *Kirkus Reviews*

"*Nixonland* is a grand historical epic. Rick Perlstein has turned a story we think we know -- American politics between the opposing presidential landslides of 1964 and 1972 -- into an often surprising and always fascinating new narrative. This riveting book, full of colorful detail and great characters, brings back to life an astonishing era -- and shines a new light on our own." -- Jeffrey Toobin author of *The Nine: Inside the Secret World of the Supreme Court*

"This is a terrific read. What a delight it is to discover the new generation of historians like Rick Perlstein not

only getting history correct but giving us all fresh insights and understanding of it." -- John W. Dean Nixon's White House counsel

"Rick Perlstein has written a fascinating account of the rise of Richard Nixon and a persuasive argument that this angry, toxic man will always be part of the American landscape." -- Richard Reeves author of *President Reagan: The Triumph of Imagination*

"Rick Perlstein's *Nixonland* digs deep into a decisive period of our history and brings back a past that is all the scarier for its intense humanity. With a firm grasp on the larger meaning of countless events and personalities, many of them long forgotten, Perlstein superbly shows how paranoia and innuendo flowed into the mainstream of American politics after 1968, creating divisive passions that have survived for decades." -- Sean Wilentz Princeton University, author of *The Age of Reagan: A History, 1974-2008*

"The mest book written about the 1960s." -- *Newsweek*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Darrell Fowler:**

Book is written, printed, or created for everything. You can understand everything you want by a guide. Book has a different type. As it is known to us that book is important point to bring us around the world. Beside that you can your reading skill was fluently. A guide *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* will make you to become smarter. You can feel much more confidence if you can know about almost everything. But some of you think in which open or reading some sort of book make you bored. It isn't make you fun. Why they could be thought like that? Have you in search of best book or suitable book with you?

#### **Richard Dean:**

In this 21st centuries, people become competitive in every single way. By being competitive now, people have do something to make these people survives, being in the middle of the actual crowded place and notice by simply surrounding. One thing that sometimes many people have underestimated the idea for a while is reading. Yeah, by reading a guide your ability to survive improve then having chance to stay than other is high. In your case who want to start reading any book, we give you that *Nixonland: The Rise of a President and the Fracturing of America* book as starter and daily reading book. Why, because this book is greater than just a book.

#### **Cody Chenault:**

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**Jerry Brower:**

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