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#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER

**ROBERT A. CARO**

**THE YEARS OF**

**LYNDON**

**JOHNSON**

**MEANS**

★ **OF** ★

**ASCENT**

## *In praise of Means of Ascent*

“Thrilling. Caro burns into the reader's imagination the story of the [1948 Senate] election. Never has it been told so dramatically, with breathtaking detail piled on incredible development ... In *The Path to Power*, Volume I of his monumental biography, Robert A. Caro ignited a blowtorch whose bright flame illuminated Johnson's early career. In *Means of Ascent* he intensifies the flame to a brilliant blue point.”

—Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, *New York Times*

“Caro has a unique place among American political biographers. He has become, in many ways, the standard by which his fellows are measured. Caro's diligence [and] ambition are phenomenal ... A remarkable story ... Epic.”

—Mark Feeney, *Boston Sunday Globe*

“Brilliant. No brief review does justice to the drama of the story Caro is telling, which is nothing less than how present-day politics was born.”

—Henry F. Graff, Professor of History, Columbia University

“The most compelling study of American political power and corruption since Robert Penn Warren's *All the King's Men*.... It is nothing less than a political epic, the definitive account of a watershed election, rich with all of the intrigue and drama that have become the stuff of legend. [It has] the suspense of a political thriller.”

—Steve Neal, *Fort Worth Star Telegram*

“A great book, and I believe the completed biography will be the great book about American politics in the twentieth century. The story of the '48 election is remarkable, unique. If it weren't a cliché, I'd say it has Tolstoyan epic grandeur.”

—Robert K. Massie

“A spellbinding political thriller ... riveting.”

—Arthur Salm, *San Diego Tribune*

“No one understands Lyndon Baines Johnson without reading Robert A. Caro.”

—James F. Vesely, *Sacramento Union*

“Immensely engrossing ... Caro is an indefatigable investigative reporter and a skillful historian who can make the most abstract material come vibrantly to life. [He has a] marvelous ability to tell a story.... His analysis of how power is used—to build highways and dams, to win elections, to get rich—is masterly.”

—Ronald Steel, *The New York Times Book Review*

“A spellbinding, hypnotic journey into the political life and times of Lyndon Johnson. Readers will appreciate the sheer magnitude of research, the illumination of enduring but obscured facets of this political period, and a narrative that brings to life with impressive detail the drama's major players and events.... Caro's talent as a writer is evident throughout the book. Riveting drama.”

—Jim Finley, *The Los Angeles Times*

“Masterful ... A brilliant piece of scholarship.”

—William Hines, *The Chicago Sun-Times Book Week*

“Magnificent. Thunder and lightning rip through Mr. Caro’s viscerally compelling work.”

—Thomas W. Hazlett, *The Wall Street Journal*

“We who are alive today are privileged to be present at the creation of what, when it is completed, may rank as the most riveting and disturbing American political biography of this century.... Magnificently written.”

—Theodore M. O’Leary, *The Kansas City Star*

“Riveting ... explosive. Good historians bestow suspense on foregone conclusions. Such works manage to override knowledge about how things turned out; they do so by recapturing the tensions and uncertainties of the participants while the outcome was in doubt. That Lyndon Baines Johnson, for example, became the 36th President will surprise no one now. But readers of Robert Caro’s *Means of Ascent* are in for a white-knuckle, hair-raising tale that could have ended in any of a dozen different ways, with L.B.J. in the White House the longest shot of all. This is good history.... Caro’s treatment achieves poetic intensity.”

—Paul Gray, *Time*

“One can trust every detail. The sagaciousness and discretion of Caro’s investigations are obvious from the start.”

—Denis Wadley, *Minneapolis/St. Paul Star Tribune*

“Brilliant. An extraordinary piece of documentation.”

—Ruth Pollack Coughlin, *Detroit News*

“Extraordinary and brilliant ... devastatingly persuasive ... Caro’s prodigious research, and his discovery of original sources ignored by

other biographers, proves beyond doubt that much of what Johnson said about these years was false.... The spadework combined with Caro's passion makes for drama more riveting than any novel."

—Mark A. Gamin, *The Cleveland Plain Dealer*

"His research is dazzlingly exhaustive, his gripping story is enhanced by excellent writing, and his findings [seem] largely irrefutable. No one has done a better job of researching [the 1948 race] than Mr. Caro. He has amassed convincing evidence. He has produced a portrait not only of Lyndon Johnson, but also of the politics and values of mid-century America."

—Philip Seib, *The Dallas Morning News*

"A spellbinder ... With every chapter you read more voraciously."

—Benjamin DeMott

"A brilliant but disturbing book ... A devastating study that warrants the broadest readership. He reminds us that Americans need to be vigilant in upholding their highest standards of ethics and good government."

—Guy Halverson, *The Christian Science Monitor*

"Fascinating ... gripping. Astonishing and engrossing detail."

—Elizabeth Bennett, *The Houston Post*

"Compelling political biography ... a course in political campaigning."

—Mike Cox, *Austin-American Statesman*

“A stunningly powerful, formidable work. Time and again, virtually chapter by chapter, Caro presents fresh and compelling accounts of Johnson’s wilderness years. Exhaustive, unassailable research ... A distinguished biography.”

—W. Joseph Campbell, *The Hartford Courant*

“Caro is the premier biographer of our time.”

—Bernard D. Nossiter, *The Progressive*

“Caro has changed the art of political biography.”

—Nicholas von Hoffman

“Robert Caro gives us an LBJ who was human and then some, and what’s enthralling is how this lucid, fascinating book keeps forcing us to confront the extreme contradictions of what (on good days) we call human nature.... Caro is that rare biographer who seems intrigued by his subject but happily free from the urge to either heroicize, psychologize—or excoriate and punish.”

—Francine Prose, *7 Days*

“*Means of Ascent* is a political biography, a detective story, a western and a character study. Above all, it is a richly textured, multilayered chronicle of fundamental social and political change and how this change highlighted elements of Mr. Johnson’s character: his powerful needs, tremendous ambition and particular genius.”

—Robert A. Kronley, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

“A thorough, compelling, fascinating portrait ... *Means of Ascent* is thrilling. There is really no other word. Caro’s heightened narrative style, with its rolling, slightly archaic cadences, bears the reader

along like a river.... He brings to the story ... not only new details but an edge-of-the-seat storytelling power.”

—Lloyd Rose, *The Village Voice Literary Supplement*

“Caro’s writing summons a reviewer’s clichés—*gripping, compelling, absorbing, irresistible ... unputdownable*. The sentences sparkle. The details pile up in a mountain of evidence.... Caro has at last set the record straight.”

—Richard Marius, *Harvard Magazine*

“Caro is vivid in his storytelling, masterly in his command of [diverse] subjects. *Means of Ascent* is a study of events as well as of character—events the more compelling for having been hidden for so many years—but the character study is equally dramatic, a picture of a complex man who evokes complex and contradictory responses. Caro’s account of this all-American political circus [the 1948 Senate election] is a terrific piece of reporting and writing that makes one feel tremendous excitement and even suspense at the events leading up to a foregone conclusion.”

—Rhoda Koenig, *New York Magazine*

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