



Nixon's White House Wars: The Battles That Made and Broke a President and Divided America Forever

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Forever Patrick J. Buchanan

From Vietnam to the Southern Strategy, from the opening of China to the scandal of Watergate, Pat Buchanan--speechwriter and senior adviser to President Nixon--tells the untold story of Nixon's embattled White House, from its historic wins to its devastating defeats.

In his inaugural address, Nixon held out a hand in friendship to Republicans and Democrats alike. But by the fall of 1969, massive demonstrations in Washington and around the country had been mounted to break his presidency.

In a brilliant appeal to what he called the "Great Silent Majority," Nixon sent his enemies reeling. Vice President Agnew followed by attacking the blatant bias of the media in a fiery speech authored and advocated by Buchanan. And by 1970, Nixon's approval rating soared to 68 percent, and he was labeled "The Most Admired Man in America."

Then one by one, the crises came, from the invasion of Cambodia, to the protests that killed four students at Kent State, to race riots and court ordered school busing.

Buchanan chronicles Nixon's historic trip to China, and describes the White House strategy that brought about Nixon's 49-state landslide victory over George McGovern in 1972.

When the Watergate scandal broke, Buchanan urged the president to destroy the Nixon tapes before they were subpoenaed, and fire Special Prosecutor Archibald Cox, as Nixon ultimately did in the "Saturday Night Massacre." After testifying before the Watergate Committee himself, Buchanan describes the grim scene at Camp David in August 1974, when Nixon's staff concluded he could not survive.

In a riveting memoir from behind the scenes of the most controversial presidency of the last century, *Nixon's White House Wars* reveals both the failings and achievements of the 37th President, recorded by one of those closest to Nixon from before his political comeback, through to his final days in office.

Includes a bonus PDF of the Appendix, which includes handwritten notations on presidential memos

Nixon's White House Wars: The Battles That Made and Broke a President and Divided America Forever Details

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From Reader Review Nixon's White House Wars: The Battles That Made and Broke a President and Divided America Forever for online ebook

Andrew says

I received a free copy of this book from the publisher through Netgalley in exchange for an honest review.

Woo-boy! Ok, so a couple of disclaimers up front. I am definitely a left leaning person politically (if not a bit more than leaning) and was honestly mostly interested in this book to learn more about Watergate. That being said, I also just have a fascination with history and have been trying to learn more about all the presidents since I discovered the Washington Post's Presidential podcast a few months back. I also have heard people compare the current White House to being most similar to Nixon's so I was curious about that as well. All of this is leading to say I hated this book so much.

I genuinely wanted to learn from this book. I wanted to know more about Nixon than just the scandals. I wanted to hear a well thought out justification for some conservative policies that I generally find abhorrent. Unfortunately, it seems the primary purpose of this book is for Buchanan to simultaneously take a victory lap for being the genius that got Nixon elected and was behind every move that could be conceived of as good by him and at the same time bemoan how unfairly Nixon and therefore he was treated throughout the presidency. Again this is ok. I get it he is telling his part of the story and naturally most people make themselves more of the protagonist in their own stories, but it gets very tiresome after a while to hear that if Nixon just followed his advice he would be seen as the greatest post-war president.

However, even this is not what drives me to dislike this book. For that, I have to credit Buchanan's abilities to take political potshots at current politicians and situations in a book about the Nixon years. At one point he brings up Bill Ayers and the Weathermen and cannot resist the urge to bring back the attack on President Obama from 2008 that he was friends with him. He also does not ever explain why his conservative views (which he is very proud of being the rightest of right wingers in the administration) were correct, but instead just insists that the idea of the silent majority proves that these views are politically worthwhile. Again, he brings up current events by saying that the only people who are still allowed to be discriminated against are white males (I almost threw my kindle) and then proceeded to say that the rise of Donald Trump shows this is true. To be fair to him, his goal was probably not to explain his views in the book and it reads a lot more like political strategy than actual political theory, however, I think it makes it very hard to engage anybody who does not share his views since the book is so aggressive and sanctimonious about how correct all his political ideas are without offering much justification.

It was somewhat fascinating to read someone actually try to defend Nixon when it came to Watergate. Again he casts himself as a hero, saying that if he was listened to Nixon would not have been forced to resign. He also makes the point that the whole investigation was started over leaks which are also illegal which sounds eerily similar to arguments being made now about investigations into the current administration. Again, to give the book some credit it was fascinating to read someone have these views and also to see the inner workings of a White House that hated the press, especially since Buchanan was tasked to deal with this in a lot of ways. My advice to you would be if you can overlook his hack-y, conservative-cable-news style that this book is kind of an interesting read. If not, stay away.

Also posted on Purple People Readers.

Ronald J. says

History by a man who was there, from 1966, with Richard Nixon, from his first term to his second. He wrote a lot of memos on strategies, and speeches (for Nixon and vice president Agnew), created controversy and was the voice of conservatism in a rather centrist White House. It's a long book, revolving around the memos, but the commentary is excellent, the writing breezy, and some of the stories fascinating and/or funny. He covers Vietnam, domestic policy (busing, quotas, etc.), as well as the historic visit to China (he was against the visit), to the final days of Watergate, and even on the post-presidency and his move to the Reagan White House. Well worth the read if you have an interest in presidential history.

Daniel Silliman says

There are parts of this book where Buchanan is just saying "if everyone had only listened to me," but you also get, again and again, Buchanan's analysis of the politics of the Nixon years. It's bracing how Machiavellian he is. He never exerts any effort deciding what's right; he always focuses on how the politics will play out to give him and Nixon power. Buchanan does it all: wedge issues, identity politics, spin, changing the story, choosing your enemy, and more. Here, he recounts how he did it, bluntly and with historical memos.

Buchanan can be shocking. He defends racial segregation without the typical whine about it really being about the limitation of government power. No, for him, it's about white people not having to live with black people. He also argues--apparently seriously--that the economic plight of white men in the rust belt and coal belt is due to affirmative action. He says that newspapers publishing leaked government information (like the Pentagon papers) is as bad or worse than the Watergate burglaries. He says, apparently without hesitation and certainly without irony, that Nixon should have burned the White House tapes. It's insane. He's racist. The man's moral compass is scary.

There's a lot to learn here, about history and about politics. Buchanan really is Donald Trump's John the Baptist. I would recommend this book, but with the warning, you're going to have to spend time in Pat Buchanan's brain.

Mitchell Kaufman says

A good insight into the Nixon White House, the ups and the downs, but rather self-serving. Another book that indicates that Watergate was the result of staffers who didn't understand that Nixon would rant and then calm down and give reasonable instructions taking his first statements seriously. Another book contradicting John Dean, but make no mistake, Buchanan wants you to know what he did and how things would have been much better if people had just listened to him.

Flowergarden24 says

This is an interesting insight into the Nixon Buchanan relationship but I do not think it is an objective assessment of how great Nixon was. There is no mention of the Chennault affair which shows Nixon to be more interested in himself than peace in Vietnam and the lives of thousands of US soldiers. I wonder if Buchanan didn't know, doesn't know now, or refuses to acknowledge the very dark sides of that presidency which would not put Nixon on such a pedestal. I am glad I read this anyway because there are many viewpoints which should be heard. Many books reveal the motives behind many of Nixon's decisions and the tapes and records are available to all. Buchanan has an interesting life for sure.

Randal White says

Sad! A view of the Nixon presidency, through the eyes of its arch conservative member, Patrick Buchanan. The detail is amazing. The author must either have an incredible memory, or kept notes on everything he has done. Throughout the book, the central theme is that Buchanan's ultra conservative beliefs are the only path to success for the United States. Everyone who has a differing opinion is just wrong, and is the enemy. (Sounds eerily familiar to the current administration). It must be something to be so sure of oneself, and to have never an inkling of doubt of one's beliefs, or that you may sometimes be wrong. However, I think it would be a sad and lonely existence. It makes me feel bad for Mr. Buchanan.

Mike says

Pat Buchanan is a great writer (which is one of the reasons he got his job with Nixon) and this book takes a look at the White House years, and the inside goings-on between various staffers and the media at the time. It is a very interesting behind the scenes tale about the Nixon White House and his staff. A great read and probably the last book to come out from a former Nixon staffer.

Highly recommended.

E says

This book was fascinating. An intriguing review caught my interest, which is good, because I likely would never have picked up this book on my own. Sure, the author comes out smelling like a rose, but he was in fact for the most part right on with his advice and strategies during the 5.5 years that Nixon was in the White House. Buchanan was Nixon's advisor well before his 1968 run, and remained Nixon's confidant up until the 38th president's death.

Buchanan tells a gripping tale of how Nixon went from a president elected with 43% of the popular vote to one who won 61% and carried 49 states. And rightfully so, since Buchanan was behind much of Nixon's strategy to reach out to the "silent majority" that was sick and tired of east coast elites, anti-war radicals, domestic terrorists, forced integration, and so much more (sound familiar? PJB definitely wrote this book with 2016 in mind, and it's uncanny how much of this stuff has come full circle, placing a man many would view as Buchanan's ideological heir in the White House).

The book bogs down in the last 100 pages for the obvious reason of Watergate, but thankfully Buchanan doesn't take us through every twist and turn (I personally find Watergate-mania to be incredibly boring). Buchanan relies heavily on the memoranda that he wrote regularly for the president, and they provide great insight into Nixon's efforts to appease conservatives (which he never truly was, and thus left a lot of reform on the table, and a lot of idiocy on the Supreme Court--except for Rehnquist).

In bringing this meandering review to the end, I will admit that this book is not an unbiased look at the Nixon years, but it is consistently captivating, and will give new light on a man who it is hard for me not to respect, even if many of his decisions drove me nuts.

Jenny says

I have been reading books about the late 1960s, Watergate, and President Nixon ever since I listened to political commentators compare 2016 to 1968 last November. Since I was born in 1965, I didn't live through these events in the same way that some of my older friends did but I have scattered memories of some of the events. I find reading about the same events described from different points of view is interesting.

That said, I find this book a bit difficult to rate. It is well written and extremely detailed. At the same time, it is very one-sided. Buchanan is convinced that he is right and that his extremely conservative positions are the only correct ones. He uses this book to argue that Nixon's biggest mistake was not the illegal activities and cover up of Watergate but his failure to take conservative enough positions on many issues. Buchanan does not limit his criticism of Nixon to his positions on domestic issues, he also criticizes his foreign policy. The book is more of an account of Buchanan's time working for Nixon than a history of the Nixon White House or an examination of the forces that ended up destroying his presidency.

I listened to this book instead of reading it. I had a difficult time personally with some of Buchanan's more extremely conservative policy positions and his unrepentant racism. I found the repetition of information distracting and actually checked a couple of times to see if I had put in the correct CD because I found myself listening to a repeated reading of a paragraph I had already read. Some tighter editing would have helped the book.

Christopher Lawson says

NIXON'S WHITE HOUSE WARS documents, in great detail, the battles among top White House staff—especially the struggles for conservative causes. The author, Patrick J. Buchanan, kept detailed records and his correspondence with the president and other top officials. Richard Nixon “asked for and welcomed my missives. It became our primary means of conversation. Over the Nixon White House years, I would send him a thousand.”

This book is designed specifically for political junkies who really like all the nitty-gritty details about the Nixon presidency. If you are fascinated by reading detailed memoranda arguing for or against certain political causes, you will likely enjoy this book. I generally skipped over the memos.

It's easy to see how the author came to such a high position at such a young age (barely 30!). Buchanan

writes well, and argues fervently for his conservative beliefs. Coming into the White House, the author had high hopes that Nixon would advance true conservative causes. He soon discovered, however, that Nixon was not nearly as dedicated as Buchanan. The author laments Nixon seemingly embracing “Great Society” extensions in the tradition of LBJ. Right after Nixon took office, “My fears that this was not going to be the conservative administration I had envisioned during my three years with Nixon were confirmed.”

If you read nothing else, don’t miss the chapter on Nixon’s historic visit to China. I thought this chapter was the most interesting part of the book; it also shows the author’s dismay with the administration’s lukewarm embrace of conservative principles.

After the visit to China, for example, the author is disgusted at what he saw as a complete sell-out of our Taiwan friends. On the flight back, Buchanan stands up to Henry Kissinger, who negotiated the “Shanghai Communique.” Kissinger asked Pat what was wrong with the document, and tried to defend it. Buchanan would have none of it: “Though sitting in a window seat, I stood up, leaned over, put my face about eighteen inches from his, and shouted, “Bulls**t!”

The latter part of the book covers the whole Watergate mess—all the way from the first reports of a break-in, to Nixon’s resignation. I did not know that Buchanan had actually testified about his peripheral role in Watergate. Similarly, I had no idea that the author’s brother had been falsely accused of money laundering during that same time period. (Cronkite’s network had to issue an apology.)

The author includes the transcript of a light-hearted testimony before Senator Sam Ervin. The author also includes voluminous copies of memoranda sent to the president. Perhaps the most interesting was the one recommending that Nixon burn the tapes.

This book is quite serious, as is the author. There are a few lighthearted moments, however. In China, Buchanan describes the drinking bouts: “One problem we all had that night was the drinking. The mao-tai the Chinese served for toasts—I still have four bottles—tasted as one imagines gasoline might taste. It was awful. The only thing that made it tolerable was that the more we consumed the more we began to ignore the taste.”

Another funny moment describes the author and Henry Kissinger poolside: “Henry, wearing his bathing suit and working on a tan, repaired to his chaise, beside which lay papers and files. As we talked, he bemoaned the fact that though he was national security adviser to the most powerful man on earth and had secret papers lying all about him, no beautiful women had tried to seduce him.”

So all in all, I found **NIXON’S WHITE HOUSE WARS** to be an interesting book, documenting one of the most turbulent political periods in recent times. I liked seeing the author’s perspective on the Nixon years—especially the visit to China. Prior to reading this book, I did not realize how controversial this trip was, and how it angered the conservatives in the White House. The whole time I was reading this book, I kept thinking, “Buchanan was barely 30?”

Advance Review Copy courtesy of the publisher.

See also Bassocantor.com

Paul Miller says

Insider's view at the Nixon presidency from the brilliant, biting, provocateur - conservative speechwriter, Pat Buchanan. Genuinely fascinating look at the staff process - heavy citation from his memos of the period. Unique look at Nixon himself - a domestic liberal w/Moynihan as urban advisor, affirmative action, EPA, liberal Supreme Court appointees, while a global conservative - pro Israel, detente, and the visit to China. Deep look at Watergate and the political process - per Buchanan, an easily remedied problem had Nixon addressed decisively early. I was floored w/the number of historical events during the period - Kent State, Agnew, Vietnam, McGovern and Muskie, etc...

If you enjoy American history and politics, a truly engrossing read because of the time period and the heavy use of original material.

Adam says

I was pretty excited to read this book. Pat Buchanan is one of my favorite authors and he had an inside view of the Nixon administration, who I've always viewed as the more interesting presidents. My guess is this will be the last book written by Nixon by an insider that was there. Buchanan was critical but fair and the details he had was incredible. Highly recommend this book.

The American Conservative says

Had Richard Nixon confined himself to a single term and stepped down in January 1973, Patrick J. Buchanan writes of the man he served for eight years as senior adviser, speechwriter, confidant, and friend, he now would rank "as one of the great or the near-great presidents." Writing in his 13th book (and his third on the Nixon presidency), the feisty commentator and former presidential candidate adds that, while he opposed some of his mentor's domestic policies and foreign initiatives, he believes that "Nixon's first term was undeniably one of extraordinary accomplishment."

He's right, and this book makes the case with the author's characteristically muscular and vivid prose. When Nixon assumed office in 1969, he took command of a nation wracked by race riots, burning cities, assassinations, campus turmoil, and trembling university administrators living in fear of various New Leftists who, when they weren't tearing down the campuses, made them centers of their disruptive operations. The unrest was fueled in great part by the Vietnam war and its increasingly mindless escalation, a gift to the new administration from two preceding Democratic presidents and their think-tank advisers—the so-called Best and Brightest.

<http://www.theamericanconservative.co...>

Jean says

The title of this book intrigued me. I came across this quote by historian and biographer Sam Tenenhaus: "Buchanan begot Trumpism as his former ally William F. Buckley, Jr. begat Reaganism." Between the two I

just had to read the book. Personally, I am a moderate middle of the roader politically. In my humble attempt to understand the issues, I read books from both sides of the isle.

This is the fifth White House remembrance by a Nixon speechwriter. The first one was "Before the Fall" written in 1975 by William Safire. The book is now considered a classic. I discovered that it was Buchanan who created the phrase "The Great Silent Majority".

The book is supposed to be about Nixon but in my opinion, it is a memoir of Buchanan's time in the Nixon White House. Buchanan's ultra-right-wing philosophy is presented throughout the book. He discusses the causes of division that Nixon inherited such as the Vietnam war, school busing, civil rights, ethnic communities and what Buchanan calls liberal judiciary. He also stated that all media is liberal. Buchanan states he tried to swing Nixon to protectionism to help save American jobs. I noted that Nixon created the Environmental Protection Agency in spite of Buchanan's advice.

The book is well written. I was amazed that Buchanan wrote in such detail. He must have kept a detailed diary. I noted he also did the usually type of research of material such as reviewing the materials at the Nixon Library. The book does provide an in-depth behind the scenes view of the Nixon presidency. The author writes that Nixon was a Wilsonian idealist and a utopian Quaker pacifist. I found it difficult to understand Buchanan's absolute belief that his opinion is correct and the only path for the country to follow.

I read this as an audiobook downloaded from Audible. The book is almost eighteen hours long. Arthur Morey does an excellent job narrating the book. At times, I thought it was Richard Nixon speaking. Morey did an excellent job portraying Nixon. Morey is an actor, voice over artist and award-winning audiobook narrator.

Locky says

There has never been a more consistent political intellectual than Patrick J. Buchanan.

For decades, 'Uncle Pat' has been the voice of reason and common sense not only in the Whitehouse, where he was considered the 'token conservative', but also as a political pundit and author. He was ahead of his time, calling for much needed immigration reform and non interventionism, long before one Donald Trump successfully ran for president using the same policies.

My heart does goes out to Mr. Buchanan. He's spent his entire life fighting the good fight, yet society has degraded to almost unrecognizable conditions. What Nixon struggled with in the 60's and 70's (a hostile media, entertainment and political environment) has grown into monstrous proportions in the current age.

As for the book itself, it's unofficially a sequel to 'The Greatest Comeback', the story of Nixon's path from 'political has-been' to president. The high intelligence and keen perceptive abilities of Buchanan are obvious to the reader and one comes away with an appreciation of his political chess game. To class Buchanan as 'just a speechwriter' is borderline defamatory as his guidance in regards to Nixon was top class information. Definitely read this book if you want a first hand example of the life within the president's trusted few.

To be honest, I'm a little down after reading this book as I think this might be Pat's final work. He's one of the authors and pundits who got me on the right path I can't express my gratitude enough for that. God bless you, Mr. Buchanan.

