



**BILL** MASTERING *the*  
PRESIDENCY  
**CLINTON**  
NIGEL HAMILTON

## **Bill Clinton: Mastering the Presidency**

*Nigel Hamilton*

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# **Bill Clinton: Mastering the Presidency**

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## **Bill Clinton: Mastering the Presidency** Nigel Hamilton

A decade-and-a-half after President William Jefferson Clinton first took the oath of office, biographer Nigel Hamilton tells the riveting story of what was possibly the greatest self-reinvention of a president in office in modern times. The Clinton presidency began disastrously—kicking off with the worst transition in living memory and deteriorating through a series of fiascos, from gays in the military to Hillary Clinton's failed health care reform. How Bill Clinton faced up to his failures and refashioned himself in the White House thereafter is an epic, hitherto unwritten story—a story that climaxes with the trouncing of Bob Dole in the landslide presidential election in 1996. Clinton began his second term as the undisputed and tremendously popular leader of the Western world.

In vivid prose, Hamilton charts Clinton's dramatic reversal of fortune and his ultimate triumph over himself—and his foes. *Bill Clinton: Mastering the Presidency* is a riveting narrative of American politics, an incisive character portrait, and powerful reminder of what a great president can accomplish.

## **Bill Clinton: Mastering the Presidency Details**

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## **From Reader Review Bill Clinton: Mastering the Presidency for online ebook**

### **MzDivaDawn says**

I actually learned more about Newt Gingrich, Dick Morris, and current CIA Head Leon Panetta in this book than I would have expected. Very insightful - certainly changed my opinions on some things

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### **Amanda says**

This is the second in what I assume is a trilogy on Bill Clinton. Having read the first a few years ago, I was looking forward to the next one. I only have a vague memory of his early first term, but I was surprised to be reminded of how chaotic his beginnings were, how laughable the management of something as huge as the White House was and how much of a learning curve both he and his team underwent. On the other hand, I was reminded of how inspiring he could be with his ability to empathize and how much he really did connect to the American people. I will say it makes me sad to think his second term will be one of promise unfulfilled due to his bad choices.

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### **Joe says**

Book Forty-Three (and the final book!) of my Presidential Challenge.

It's been a long road people, but at last I come to the end. The final presidential biography. For this honor I chose ole Slick Willy himself. He was the head honcho during many of my formative years in the 90's but during that time I was very concerned with the length of skirts and the size of breasts but it appears that he was too so...there's that.

This was a great book! It went down smooth, like reading the longest Time Magazine article in the world. This was the second book in what I imagine will ultimately be a three part series. The first was about his upbringing and rise to power in Arkansas. This one was about his tumultuous first term in the White House. Because I was actually alive during this time period all the names were familiar but I often had no prior idea who was who and what was what. I knew that...something...happened in Bosnia. I knew there were some BJ's in the Oval Office. I knew that Universal Health Care went over like a wet fart. I knew Vince Foster killed himself (or did he? Yea, he totally did. That conspiracy theory is way off). Putting all these events in their proper context was great fun.

I especially loved reading about Newt Gingrich and how he is clearly his own worst enemy. What sucks for him is that 9 out of every 10 things he says sounds like he's a genius, which he clearly is. But that 10th thing, ho-boy that 10th thing is always a doozy! It made me sad that the relationship between Congress and the President hasn't really progressed since this time.

I was very impressed with Clinton's ability to rally during his first term. He stumbled numerous times out of the blocks but recovered nicely and really turned around the economy and America's reputation in the world. His true power came from the Republican's constantly underestimating him.

Do I care that he got some special treatment from a certain intern? Not in the least! The only time I rejoice in this is when a social crusader who loves condemning people gets caught doing this. Clinton put himself out there as a family man and then cheated because it's not socially acceptable to just cheat. If it was, he would but such is the world. Hamilton does a great job of showing that the FBI basically wasted their time on this matter while terrorist cells around the world operated unhampered.

A very enjoyable read and a fitting end to my two year challenge to read at least one biography on every president. My next goal is much lower brow: To read all of the Stephen King books I haven't yet gotten to. Wish me luck!

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### **Brian says**

In the dozen or so books that I have read about Bill Clinton including his autobiography Nigel Hamilton's books always stand out. These are among the most balanced and well thought out books written on the presidency of Clinton. Hamilton takes time for painstaking research of not only presidential archives but newspapers and voluminous secondary sources. This book which follows Clinton's rise to the presidency and his time as governor focuses on the first term in office. It accurately and effectively assess the first years where Clinton learned how to be president. The book encompasses several areas from the scandals, the role of Hillary in the White House and of course domestic and foreign affairs.

The start of his first term can only be described in one word: disaster. Clinton was unable to effectively set up a transition team which would plague him through his early years in office when many of his candidates particularly in the justice department would have to resign over various scandals. Clinton himself was plagued by the scandals of Troopergate and Paula Jones while fending off his wife's scandals in Whitewater and Travelgate. These early years and political naiveté of the president were mastered by the end. As Hamilton points out and Clinton admits in his autobiography the stonewalling tactics that were used in these early scandals only fanned the flames quicker and in many cases particularly with Whitewater dragged the case along further than necessary. These scandals followed several legislative failures and executive failures from universal healthcare reform to gays in the military. Despite this those first two years were not entirely dark. The passage of NAFTA and the Oslo Peace accords were triumphs that came out of these dark days of his early presidency and a tax cut package that saved the American economy proved viable.

Hamilton argues that Bill Clinton finally began to master the presidency and appear presidential after two events. In his previous book Hamilton shows that Bill Clinton is at his finest when he is running for office. When Clinton decides to fight the contract of America and use Dick Morris triangulation arguments to reposition himself as a candidate he is given for the first time a solid position to run from since 1992. The bombing of the Oklahoma building was the second event that helped redefine his presidency. Here Clinton was able to be at his finest when empathizing with people and demonstrates leadership. He ends his co-president-ship with his wife and takes responsibility to lead the nation doing an impressive job for most people and his approval ratings soar. The Bosnian crisis gave President Clinton the best chance to showcase leadership and coupled with the republican shutdown of government he emerged on top of his republican opponents.

In the final analysis of President Clinton's first term he is seen as a brilliant politician but a flawed man. The scandals and poor organization of the White House plagued Clinton and forced him to spend his first two years at a public relations disadvantage. Hamilton's work is one of the best accounts on Bill Clinton and one of the fairest. It is encompassing of a wide range of sources and fairly asses them to come to logical

conclusions.

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### **Bob Peru says**

i love me some bill clinton by and large. dude made some mistakes sure--the blowjobs from the fat girl didn't really help. but he was a good prez. i miss him. hillary clinton--not so much.

man o man does hillary clinton have a mouth on her! i feel sorry for bill clinton.

like i say i love me some bill, but hillary clinton is a fuckin' nightmare phony fake. the dems are CRAZY if they nominate her. i'm a lifelong democrat who's NEVER EVER crossed party lines (and won't), but i will sit out the prez race if hillary clinton is the nominee. and i'm not the only one. she is truly horrible.

i wish bill clinton could run again. 4eva! make him king and get on with our business.

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### **Ric White says**

This book comes across as an "honest" take on the first 4 years of the Clinton presidency. I appreciated the author's candid description of the failures of the Clintons in the first two years of his time in office, while also highlighting their triumphs in the next two years. I also appreciated the use of various viewpoints from those who were involved in the decision-making processes. I was able to take on a new understanding of Hilary's strange approach to her role as the First Lady, as well as the madness that took place in the establishment of a staff in the White House in the first several months. I admit that, at times, this book comes across as too extreme, as the administration is occasionally conveyed as completely incapable in early chapters, while the Republicans are conveyed as some evil empire in the latter. The main reason for only 4 stars, though, is this book's treatment of Monica Lewinsky. I agree with the author that too much was made of the entire affair and that it distracted the government from doing what it needed to do to run the country. However, he paints Clinton as a victim, highlighting a time when Lewinsky flashed her thong at the President as something he couldn't possibly have resisted. He also refers to her as 'plump' far too many times, something I don't feel was incredibly relevant. All in all, though, I enjoyed the book and its insights into this time period that I am not quite old enough to recall.

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### **Fred Kohn says**

This book makes me sad that there's no Nigel Hamilton book on Clinton's second term; at least not yet. I learned a lot. The book does seem to have a left wing bias, though not enough that I found it particularly troubling. Hamilton sure loves his metaphors! Occasionally I really enjoyed them; such as his lengthy description of an interview with Clinton by Tom Brokaw as a boxing match complete with punches and counterpunches. (Brokaw ends up on the mat.) But at other times they were just plain bewildering, and occasionally even confused the meaning so much that I had to reread. I suppose that that is a small price to pay for the amount of stuff I learned.

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## **Sam Motes says**

A fairly balanced review of the accomplishments and foibles of Bill Clinton during his time in office. From the shaky start to a cabinet running on cylinders to coming off the rails morally as he struggled with personal demons and running the country.

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## **Brian Eshleman says**

The retrospective from the President, the major players in his administration, and in the form of the author's analysis gave food for thought a decade later. Was amazed to find Clinton so candid about his mistakes and limitations and irked by the author's repeated unwillingness to distinguish between Islamic terrorists masking violence with religious rhetoric and American Christians motivated by reasons of faith to vote and speak under the Constitution against actions they disagreed with.

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## **Mona says**

**TITLE:** Bill Clinton: Mastering the Presidency

**WHY I CHOSE THIS BOOK:** I am trying to read a book about every US president

**REVIEW:** This book presented a balanced perspective showing Clinton's strengths and flaws. It also showed what is often a truism, that what is often our greatest strength can also be our greatest flaw. So Clinton's ability to see all sides and empathize with others when taken to an extreme can be paralyzing indecision and wishy-washiness. On the whole I still believe Bill Clinton was a president who cared and tried to do the right thing for the little people. However, he was a centrist candidate and president, so he sometimes did things that seemed like appeasement or a betrayal of his principles. However, I do think his principles were center left. Hillary was more left at that time. I think that her experience in the white house pushed her more to the center.

As for his philandering - I know I have had occasion to be dismissive or apologetic - but I really should unequivocally say that he when it comes to his interactions with women sexually is a pig - likely a sex addict. It is not clear to me whether Hillary was "okay" with his behavior as long as it was not too public - it was the public part that bothered her the most - of course it was very public. I certainly think they are two people who love and respect each other as individuals and whatever reason they have stayed together they have (versus Trump, Limbaugh, Gingrich, Dole who have cast wives aside after affairs - and you have to give them props for that.

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## **Eileen says**

A very honest account of a man who bungled the presidency at first and then got it right. If you like historical novels, this one fills in a lot of details....ones that I missed at the time.

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## **Erik Larson says**

The author is very clear with his analogy of Clinton. Starts off with Clintons rough first two years and details how Clinton turned everything around. I felt the Author was unbiased and did not paint Clinton in a glowing light. But rather indifferent and just stated the facts. I did not notice any bias in the book one way or the other.

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### **Len says**

Though understandably biased , this is more of a study of the Clinton first term as president rather than a biography of the man. Within the pages, there is also insight on how Hillary , early in her husband's term, acted as co-president. Before the end of the first term, husband and wife realize the presidential partnership did not work politically.

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### **Inta Waylett says**

book made me hate Hillary

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### **Francis says**

Seems to have a bit of an agenda, but quite insightful nevertheless

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