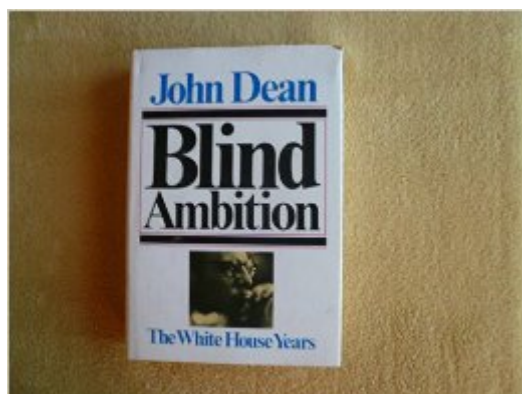


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Blind Ambition: The White House Years



Synopsis

Blind Ambition: The White House Years

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In 1970 John Dean was interviewed as the next counsel to the President; a little over four years later he was in jail. He rose, and fell, by being a willing servant. Dean's office was the center of Nixon's intelligence operation (lawyers have client confidentiality). His story was recreated from documents and taped conversations. Dean was working for the Justice Dept. when he was asked about working at the White House by Bud Krogh. John Mitchell advised him that the WH "was not a healthy place" (p.12). (Was this relatively young lawyer recruited to be a future fall guy?) The expenses for the San Clemente complex had been safely buried in inconspicuous budgets (p.16). Dean joined the WH, and soon learned "to keep my mouth shut" (p.23). Dean learned how interior decorating kept political scores (pp.29-30)! He also learned how to move upwards in influence by traveling downward through power plays, corruption, and outright crimes (p.30). Just as he made it to the top, he actually touched bottom. Dean's education began when he read the "Huston Plan", which removed most legal restraints on wiretaps, mail intercepts, and burglaries. J. Edgar Hoover vetoed the plan - the risk was greater than the reward (or turf protection?). More mundane matters are listed on pages 39-40. Page 45 tells of his first liability over a burglary. Page 51 tells how Erlichman won his power struggle against Mitchell. The Dita Beard letter is discussed on pages 53-59. J. Edgar Hoover said it was genuine, another action that infuriated the Nixon WH. The next

liability was hiding the Town House Operation (pp.59-62). By May 1972 the ITT scandal ended and Kleindienst was confirmed; it looked like the end of the problems. Chapter 3 tells of the Howard Hughes affair.

It may seem strange that just after ordering a new copy of "Blind Ambition" by John Dean, today, that I am writing a review. Actually, I have the paperback edition and have read it several times. I wanted the hardback for the larger print size. This is an excellent book, not just for taking the reader behind the scenes of Watergate, but for displaying the true personality of Richard Nixon. The description that Dean gives of Nixon throughout the book corroborates the statements by Bob Haldeman and John Erlichman. Blind Ambition is a tale of a President obsessed with only one goal - to make sure he got re-elected. Richard Nixon was a man of insecurity and self-doubt, and these traits were strongly reinforced when Nixon lost the 1962 California governorship to incumbent Edmund G. "Pat" Brown. It was Lawrence O'Brien, who was responsible for leaking about the Howard Hughes loan to Nixon's brother, Donald, that played a part in the 1962 loss of election to Governor. Now, O'Brien was National Chairman of the Democratic National Party. Nixon worried about what "goods" O'Brien had on him now. Thus, the DNC Headquarters at the Watergate Complex were broken into; a third-rate burglary was turned into a major cover-up along with other crimes and White House horrors. The discouraging remark to add to the above is, after you read this excellent book, you should try to see the TV-made movie, based on the book. The movie was well done, with Rip Torn playing Nixon, and doing the best job of anyone I have seen. Unfortunately, no commercial version of the movie was released. It was a 4-part miniseries. Once-and-awhile, the channels of STARZ shows it.

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