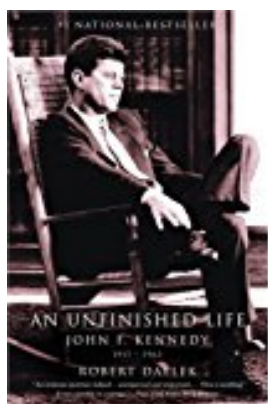


[PDF] An Unfinished Life : John F. Kennedy, 1917 - 1963

Robert Dallek - pdf download free book



Books Details:

Title: An Unfinished Life : John F.
Author: Robert Dallek
Released: 2004-05-04
Language:
Pages: 848
ISBN: 0316907928
ISBN13:
ASIN: B000ESSGQ

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly In this riveting tour de force, Boston University history professor Dallek (Flawed Giant: Lyndon Johnson and His Times, 1961-1973) delivers what will most assuredly become the benchmark JFK biography for this generation. A master of the art of narrative history, Dallek is also the first biographer since Doris Kearns Goodwin to be granted unrestricted access to key Kennedy family papers (most importantly, the Joseph and Rose Kennedy Papers) in the JFK Library. This is a substantial and significant trove to which Dallek brings a refreshingly critical eye. He has

also mined many nuggets of key information from the papers of JFK's colleagues, doctors and friends. Thus Dallek has significant new ground to break on a range of fronts including but not limited to Kennedy's health, politics, personal recklessness and love affairs. Dallek's revelations about JFK's health, based on previously unavailable medical files maintained by Kennedy's personal physician, have already received significant publicity from the Atlantic excerpt in December 2002. But here Dallek expands on that information and reveals (for the first time) the full extent of the medical coverup orchestrated by the Kennedy family: a coverup that involved the destruction of key medical records even after JFK was in his grave. On the political front, Dallek uses new inside information from a Kennedy associate to reveal the detailed mechanics (and enormous scope) of the use of Kennedy money to purchase the West Virginia primary in 1960. At the same time, Dallek has new evidence on both Jack's philandering and his recklessness. Example: During the same 1960 campaign on which his father spent millions, JFK risked it all by inviting an underage cheerleader to his hotel room. As is appropriate, close to two-thirds of this biography covers Kennedy's truncated presidency. In one of the book's most important sections, Dallek marshals new evidence that JFK did not view with favor the expansion of the war in Vietnam, and that he most likely would not have sanctioned such an expansion. Throughout the book, Dallek stops short of worshipping his subject. He is a Kennedy admirer, but he never allows this admiration to cloud either his focus or his truth telling. Dallek is to be thanked for providing the thoroughly researched, well-sourced, responsible and readable biography that has for so long been wanting in Kennedy scholarship. Illus. not seen by PW.

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From It's hard to believe that someone could find anything new to say about John F. Kennedy, but Dallek succeeds in this riveting and well-documented biography. Despite plentiful revelations about Kennedy's private life, the book is very much a political biography, which keenly explores Kennedy's grasp of modern political campaigning. (The account of how the Kennedy machine managed the issue of his Catholicism in the 1960 West Virginia primary is particularly telling.) But he wasn't always sure what to do with power once he had it. His ideas on domestic policy were surprisingly conventional, and his foreign policy seems jingoistic. Kennedy, however, had the ability to change his mind—no small accomplishment for a President—and by the time he died he was a considerably more sophisticated leader. One need not accept Dallek's fanciful, if familiar, conclusion—that, had Kennedy lived, he might have pulled the United States out of Vietnam—to think that J.F.K.'s political career was a work in progress that was arrested too soon.

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