

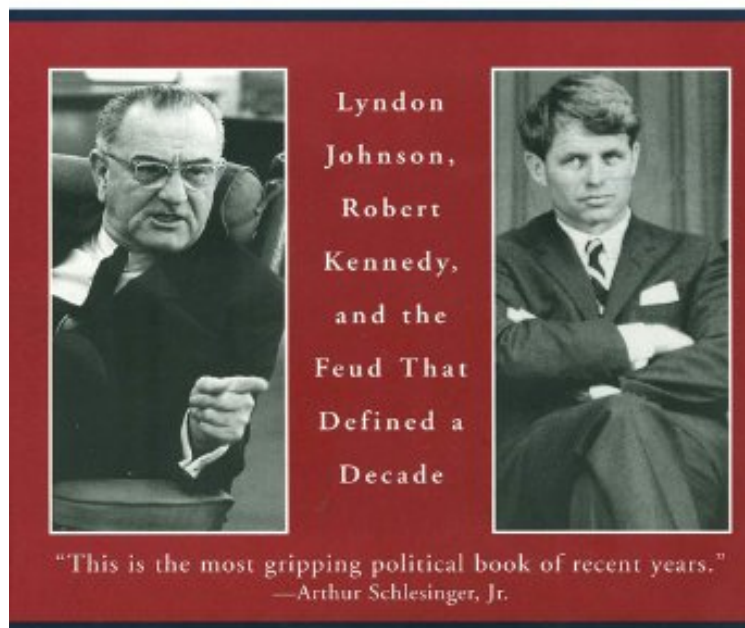
(Mobile book) Mutual Contempt: Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and the Feud that Defined a Decade:
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Mutual Contempt: Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and the Feud that Defined a Decade: Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy and the Feud That Defined a Decade

Von Jeff Shesol

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MUTUAL CONTEMPT



JEFF SHESOL

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KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Clearly the best of the recent JFK/LBJ/RFK/White House booksVon Ein KundeRecent months have seen the publication of a spate of books regarding presidential politics in the turbulent decade that was the 1960s. Taking Charge, The Kennedy Tapes, Shadow Play, LBJ's War, Kennedy and Nixon, The Walls of Jericho, The Living and the Dead, Guns and Butter, Dereliction of Duty, The Other Missiles of October---all these books offered some insight into the thoughts, beliefs, actions and geopolitical decisions of the men (and they were all men) who ran our country during that difficult and often painful period. Many of them are well-researched, some are well-written, a few have become best-sellers, but all of them are missing a vital piece of the puzzle, a flaw which leaves each of them, for all of their research and erudition, strangely unsatisfying and incomplete. This magnificent new book supplies that vital missing piece and, in doing so, paradoxically renders each of the others both more valuable and at the same time obsolete. Shesol's thesis, which he amply substantiates with tapes, documents and personal interviews, is that the feud between RFK and LBJ was pivotal not only in the later stages in their respective political careers, but also in a wide range of policy decisions taken by Johnson, as President, and Kennedy, as Attorney General and then as Senator from New York. He enlivens his book with commentary and anecdote from a variety of important figures of the time, including Arthur Schlesinger, who is also quoted approvingly on the dust jacket. This is both an important piece of historical research and a thoroughly enjoyable read. This delightfully written, important, book is essential reading for anyone who wishes to understand the Vietnam War, the Johnson Presidency, the catastrophic results of the Great Society which we are still living with today, or, indeed, the 1960s in general. It should certainly be read in preference to any of the other books mentioned above.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Good, but not definitiveVon Ein KundeGiven the recent market for books about LBJ, the consistent market for Kennedy books, and the play the LBJ-RFK relationship gets in almost every book about either man (and about JFK), it's surprising that no one has tackled this subject in a book before. But, as good as this book is, one has to wonder if it's really worth the 500+ pages Shesol devotes to it. (Chris Matthews covered the just as interesting JFK-Nixon relationship in his much shorter, more piquant book "Kennedy Nixon.") Shesol goes to some length to justify this book's subtitle -- "the feud that defined a decade" -- but doesn't really succeed. Say what you will about either LBJ or RFK, but both were far too canny politically to let their personalities completely overpower the events of the 1960s. This book is comprehensively researched, sensitive, clear-headed, and impressive...just as you would expect from an academic history paper, which is what the genesis of this book was. But for all that, this book lacks the narrative force, drive, and passion that, say, Robert Caro is likely to bring to this topic when he covers it in his comprehensive, controversial series of "The Years of Lyndon Johnson" books--which are recommended to readers who like this story. Especially early in this book, Shesol goes off on tangents (for example, on William Manchester Jackie Kennedy) which might impress a history professor but aren't really necessary in this depth in this type of book. Readers interested in RFK in particular should check out a very underrated RFK book by Jules Whitcover called "85 Days: The Last Campaign of Robert Kennedy." Readers can argue forever who, in the end, Shesol likes better. My vote says RFK, but that's far from certain, and it really doesn't matter anyway. Enjoy this book for what it is - a good, somewhat dry, tackling of a subject that is both more simple and more complex than Shesol says.0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. An excellent study of the effect of power on personality. Von Ein KundeWhat comes to the fore in this book is that power influenced both LBJ and RFK negatively -- especially with respect to their treatment of each other. During the 1960 presidential campaign and then during the JFK administration, Robert Kennedy's innate dislike and scorn of LBJ was put into practice by his uniquely powerful position within JFK's cabinet. Clearly, RFK held the upper hand from 1960 through 1963, and he used his influence to shut LBJ out of important meetings and events and to make sure that LBJ's role was little more than that of "water boy." LBJ, for his part, fumed at the repeated slights from RFK during JFK's tenure, and -- as Shesol well demonstrates -- allowed the hurt and resentment that had built up during those three years to play much too large a role in his decision-making calculus during his own administration. If anything, LBJ's well-documented personal insecurities (which may have reached the level of clinical paranoia by the time he left the presidency) and mastery of the political game made his ostracism of "all things RFK" even more effective than RFK himself had ever been able to manage. What all this means is that the personal animosity that these two important men felt toward one another was best effected by each during his own time of greatest power and influence. As a result, the talents and resources that each of these two great public servants had available to contribute were underutilized (at best) or squandered (at worst) at a time when the country desperately needed both men to help see it through some of its most difficult times. To the largest extent, Shesol does not ascribe greater fault or worse judgment to either man, and indeed he cannot, as each took advantage of his own personal power to minimize the influence of the other. That is the sad theme underlying Shesol's important and fascinating book.

Kurzbeschreibung"Mutual Contempt is at once a fascinating study in character and an illuminating meditation on the role character can play in shaping history." Michiko Kakutani, New York Times Lyndon Johnson and Robert Kennedy

loathed each other. Their antagonism, propelled by clashing personalities, contrasting views, and a deep, abiding animosity, would drive them to a bitterness so deep that even civil conversation was often impossible. Played out against the backdrop of the turbulent 1960s, theirs was a monumental political battle that would shape federal policy, fracture the Democratic party, and have a lasting effect on the politics of our times. Drawing on previously unexamined recordings and documents, as well as memoirs, biographies, and scores of personal interviews, Jeff Shesol weaves the threads of this epic story into a compelling narrative that reflects the impact of LBJ and RFK's tumultuous relationship on politics, civil rights, the war on poverty, and the war in Vietnam. As Publishers Weekly noted, "This is indispensable reading for both experts on the period and newcomers to the history of that decade." "An exhaustive and fascinating history. . . . Shesol's grasp of the era's history is sure, his tale often entertaining, and his research awesome." Russell Baker, *New York of Books* "Thorough, provocative. . . . The story assumes the dimensions of a great drama played out on a stage too vast to comprehend." Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post* (1997 Critic's Choice) "This is the most gripping political book of recent years." Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. *A New York Times Notable Book of the Year* Kurzbeschreibung "Mutual Contempt is at once a fascinating study in character and an illuminating meditation on the role character can play in shaping history." Michiko Kakutani, *New York Times* Lyndon Johnson and Robert Kennedy loathed each other. Their antagonism, propelled by clashing personalities, contrasting views, and a deep, abiding animosity, would drive them to a bitterness so deep that even civil conversation was often impossible. Played out against the backdrop of the turbulent 1960s, theirs was a monumental political battle that would shape federal policy, fracture the Democratic party, and have a lasting effect on the politics of our times. Drawing on previously unexamined recordings and documents, as well as memoirs, biographies, and scores of personal interviews, Jeff Shesol weaves the threads of this epic story into a compelling narrative that reflects the impact of LBJ and RFK's tumultuous relationship on politics, civil rights, the war on poverty, and the war in Vietnam. As Publishers Weekly noted, "This is indispensable reading for both experts on the period and newcomers to the history of that decade." "An exhaustive and fascinating history. . . . Shesol's grasp of the era's history is sure, his tale often entertaining, and his research awesome." Russell Baker, *New York of Books* "Thorough, provocative. . . . The story assumes the dimensions of a great drama played out on a stage too vast to comprehend." Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post* (1997 Critic's Choice) "This is the most gripping political book of recent years." Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. *A New York Times Notable Book of the Year* Synopsis This work looks at the antagonism between Lyndon Johnson and Robert Kennedy after John F. Kennedy's assassination. The rivalry was so bitter it divided a country and captivated the media.