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Firewall: The Iran-Contra Conspiracy And Cover-up



Synopsis

In its chilling and unsparing revelations, *Firewall* is the definitive account of the most dangerous breach of presidential authority since Watergate. With Ronald Reagan's knowledge and support, the United States attempted to trade arms for hostages held by Iranian terrorists; some of the secret money then funded the guerrilla activities of the Nicaraguan Contras, a counter-revolutionary group that Congress had specifically forbidden the administration to support. In this historic, first-person account, the independent counsel in the Iran-Contra investigation exposes the extraordinary duplicity of the highest officials of the Reagan administration and the paralyzing effects of the cover-up.

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Customer Reviews

While I was at times confused by the legal problems Walsh's team were confronted with, I did clearly understand why Lawrence Walsh did not get very far with his investigation. Mainly it was because the targets of his investigation had designed a highly secretive plot and had the protection of the CIA or the National Security Council. Documents were denied or shredded, subjects lied or refused to testify all on the basis of "national security" or out of a belief that Congress had no right to interfere in foreign policy. After reading this book, I was shaken by the realization that under the guise of a "higher purpose" or holy war our democratic principles could so easily be dispensed with. Oliver North and President Reagan were rewarded with national affection despite showing utter contempt for the rule of law! Iran-Contra was a true case of Machiavellian politics because all of our

most sacred principles were run over for the sake of the dictators ideology - that the end justifies the means. Firewall reveals the incipient dictatorship lurking beneath our fragile democracy.

This book is the story of a life-long Republican retired federal judge's seven year struggle to unravel the truth behind a vast government conspiracy to conceal willful violations of our country's laws by President Ronald Reagan and many members of his cabinet, CIA officials, members of his national security team and assorted Republican political operatives both inside Congress and out. Mr. Walsh does yeoman work in presenting the unvarnished truth he and his many assistants were finally able to decipher out of hundreds of thousands of original documents and the direct testimony of those his team were able to catch in their lies and bring into court under indictment. The complex legal issues and large cast of perpetrators makes this a difficult and necessarily repetitive slog, but the chilling story is one that Americans of any political persuasion need to be aware of. Lead by a naive President in the early stages of Alzheimers disease, and guided by a perverse notion of patriotic anticommunism that was the bedrock of cold war Republicanism, our top leaders deliberately violated laws put in place by Congress and even their own foreign policies relating to terrorism. When discovered these "patriots" launched an unprecedented web of lies and stonewalling to save Reagan from possible impeachment. Mr. Walsh was impeded at every step of his investigation and by all branches of the government. The importance of this account by Mr. Walsh is that irregardless of the legal results of the investigations, the truth of what happened and who did it is revealed for all to see. When this party touts its patriotism, beliefs in the rule of law and self responsibility and the importance of character, remember what happened here.

Even for someone familiar with the Iran-Contra scandal, Walsh's account helps to clear up many details of the Washington power structure, and to understand the odds which he was against. The White House never intended him to do what he did. The book is sensational! NYTimes says first chapters are dull. Hah! Since the NYTimes didn't pick up on the scandal from the beginning, now it sniffs. What did NYTimes want.. photos of Hoover in his undies?

A previous reviewer was critical of Walsh for not being able to get Oliver North for anything more than "spitting on the ground." Had this reviewer taken the time to actually read the book, he would have realized that Congress made that task next to impossible by granting North immunity in exchange for his testimony. The shredding of evidence and claims of "national security" for those few pieces of evidence that did survive made Walsh's task that much more difficult. Walsh is a

lifelong Republican and was appointed by a Republican President to investigate a Republican cover-up (contrast this with Republican Kenneth Starr's appointment by Democrat Bill Clinton). Under the circumstances, he did a tremendous job. Though it is necessarily dry in the first few chapters (as he gives the legal background for the story to follow), this book dutifully recounts that struggle

At times, this reads as a text book. At times, it reads as a spy thriller. Walsh goes into great detail on the investigation and attempted prosecution of those involved in the Iran-Contra scandal. This book is best suited for those interested in the affair, and are anti Reagan/Bush. I was moved by the compassion of Walsh when after interviewing Reagan, felt it would have been more damaging to our nation to try and prosecute Reagan when it was apparent alzheimers had set in. Walsh felt Reagan knew more then he said, but he also knew that the alzheimers would have been humilitaing to Reagan, and would have made prosecution impossible.

Finally a book that exposes the TRUTH on the Reagan administration. Readers need to keep in mind that although Judge Walsh did his homework, he could not get a DESERVED conviction due to a strong GOP Congress and Reagan's "halo effect" in the press's and public's eyes who refused to believe the TRUTH that Walsh, et al uncovered. This book sheds light on the Reagan administration for all it's worth: lies, corruption, cover-up, deceit, treason, cabal. Always an actor in the Oval Office. America should re-examine this SAD, UGLY incident in American history (TRUE high crimes and FELONIES) and stop worrying about Clinton's sex life (low crimes and misdemeanors).

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