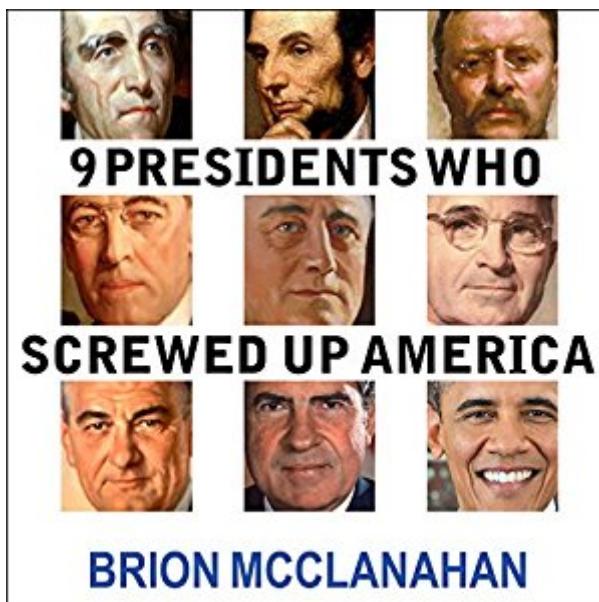


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9 Presidents Who Screwed Up America: And Four Who Tried To Save Her



Synopsis

Of the 44 presidents who have led the United States, nine made mistakes that permanently scarred the nation. Which nine? Brion McClanahan, author of *The Politically Incorrect Guide to the Founding Fathers* and *The Founding Fathers' Guide to the Constitution*, will surprise listeners with his list, which he supports with exhaustive and entertaining evidence. *9 Presidents Who Screwed Up America* is a new look back at American history that unabashedly places blame for our nation's current problems on the backs of nine very flawed men.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

McClanahan opens with a thesis about the intent of the founders versus modern expectations. "These men argued that the president was not to be a king, nor would he have the power George III had in England. But the understanding of the executive branch among most Americans" including historians" has been distorted. We ask what we think the president should do in office, not what he is constitutionally permitted to do in office. The latter should be the measure of the man." "In the Constitution, the founding fathers generation left as a vehicle for preserving self-government. We ignore it at our peril." The terms of office of the 13 presidents addressed in the book cover the full history of the country: the founding, expansion through the early 18th century, the Civil War, Reconstruction, the progressive era, World War I, the Depression, World War II, Vietnam and the great Society, and now Obama. McClanahan discusses each of the presidents' undertakings in

various spheres of action. In foreign policy and in war, did they follow the constitutional separation of powers whereby the Senate takes the lead? Did they allow the Senate to advise and consent? Did they allow the legislature to draft the legislation, or did they actively involve themselves in the legislative process? Did they execute the laws as passed by Congress, or did they selectively enforce them? Did they push themselves into the legislative and judicial spheres by setting up national boards that performed all three processes without supervision? His conclusion is that the nine presidents who screwed things up built on each other's precedents, increasingly ignoring the written limits on executive power in the Constitution.

When a presidential candidate gets on TV or in a debate and says "elect me and I'll lower taxes," "fix education" or "reform healthcare," most American voters overlook the fact that the office of President has no power delegated to it allowing the office holder to do any of these things. The President's role as "chief executive" is to "execute" the laws passed by the legislative branch (congress), and to defend the constitution by vetoing laws that congress passes which are not constitutional. But over time the perception has become that somehow the president is in fact the "King" whose will the congress must bow to, and from whose hands alone "change" can come. As a result of this, many on the right today think "Obama has destroyed the country" while those on the left believe "it's all Bush's fault." There's truth and error within both positions, but looking at the subject contextually, the fact is that those two Presidents, and others, were able to wield power as a result of the "precedents" set by their predecessors—not as a result of the existence of any constitutional authority allowing them to do the things they've done. Said another way, contrary to popular belief, we did not just awaken one day and find ourselves in the mess we're in. Rather, the proverbial snowball has been accumulating speed, size and potential destructive capacity for several generations. If Americans could be provided the evidence needed to glean this reality, then, and only then, can real "change" be brought forward and applied to our system of governance.

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