



The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism: A Short History

David Farber

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The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism tells the gripping story of perhaps the most significant political force of our time through the lives and careers of six leading figures at the heart of the movement. David Farber traces the history of modern conservatism from its revolt against New Deal liberalism, to its breathtaking resurgence under Ronald Reagan, to its spectacular defeat with the election of Barack Obama.

Farber paints vivid portraits of Robert Taft, William F. Buckley Jr., Barry Goldwater, Phyllis Schlafly, Ronald Reagan, and George W. Bush. He shows how these outspoken, charismatic, and frequently controversial conservative leaders were united by a shared insistence on the primacy of social order, national security, and economic liberty. Farber demonstrates how they built a versatile movement capable of gaining and holding power, from Taft's opposition to the New Deal to Buckley's founding of the *National Review* as the intellectual standard-bearer of modern conservatism; from Goldwater's crusade against leftist politics and his failed 1964 bid for the presidency to Schlafly's rejection of feminism in favor of traditional gender roles and family values; and from Reagan's city upon a hill to conservatism's downfall with Bush's ambitious presidency.

The Rise and Fall of Modern American Conservatism provides rare insight into how conservatives captured the American political imagination by claiming moral superiority, downplaying economic inequality, relishing bellicosity, and embracing nationalism. This concise and accessible history reveals how these conservative leaders discovered a winning formula that enabled them to forge a powerful and formidable political majority.

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