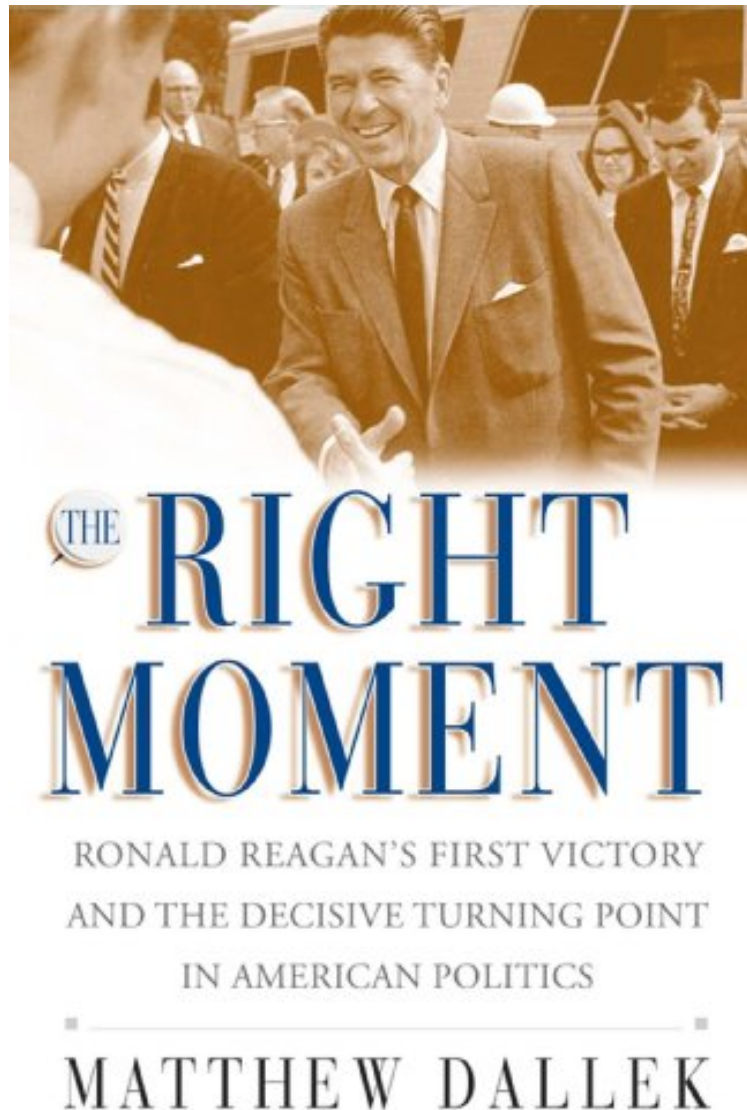


[Ebook free] The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics (English Edition)

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Von Matthew Dallek

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Von Matthew Dallek : **The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics (English Edition)** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised **The Right Moment: Ronald Reagan's First Victory and the Decisive Turning Point in American Politics (English Edition)**:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. The Race That Launched an Era Von James Gallen Many of us remember President Ronald Reagan, the Last Lion of the Twentieth Century, but how many know how he got his start in politics? "The Right Moment" tells the story of Reagan's first campaign, the 1966 race for governor, in which a fading actor and corporate spokesman made the transition to active politician. In this book author Matthew Dallek raises the question of how is it, and how ironic it is that, out of the maelstrom of the 60s, the era of student protest, urban rioting, Camelot and the Great Society, Man on the Moon, Vietnam, Hippies and Free Love, the one politician who would rise to give his name to an era was... Ronald Reagan. The backgrounds of both candidates set the stage for the first of a series of struggles between liberals and conservatives for the hearts, minds and future of America. The liberal in this race was Pat Brown, a giant killer. Brown had already defeated U.S. Senate minority leader William Knowland and former Vice-President Richard Nixon so a political newcomer seemed like a soft opponent. Brown had risen from his San Francisco legal practice to serve as Attorney General of California before being one of the few Democratic governors up to that time. Brown was one who believed in using the powers of government to aid the unfortunate and to shape society. He had achieved some success and, running in the wake of the LBJ landslide, the future seemed to be one of liberal ascendancy. Ronald Reagan had grown up as a supporter of the New Deal who gradually saw the Democratic Party leaving him. As his movie career faded, Reagan had gone into television and became a spokesman for General Electric, a role that let him go around the country to share his vision of freedom and to hear from a broad spectrum of the country. Having captured national attention for "The Speech" in support of Barry Goldwater in 1964 he immediately became a sought after candidate for governor. This campaign had the set-up for the stereotypical race of the decade. Student protests at Berkeley and rioting in Watts made Brown appear to be ineffective while Reagan appeared to offer a fresh response to California's problems. Neither candidate had a clear ride to November. Brown had to beat back a primary challenge from Los Angeles Mayor Sam Yorty, whose strong challenge revealed Brown's vulnerability. Reagan, the political neophyte, had to beat back a challenge from former San Francisco Mayor George Christopher. The campaign is skillfully narrated on the pages of this book. Perhaps the most significant line was when Brown told a group of school children "I'm running against an actor. Remember this, you know who shot Abraham Lincoln?" The backlash about finished whatever chance Brown still had. The conclusion is well known, Reagan won by almost one million votes and went on to change, not only California, but later America as a whole. The book covers a lot more of the story than I did here and it tells the story very well. This story is not important only to students of California history because it tells in miniature the story that would be repeated in the Nixon-Humphrey race two years later and the Reagan-Carter race of 1980. It is said that trends spread out California and the ripples of this election were felt across the Fruited Plain. The ripples did not stop with the retirement of Reagan in 1989. One major charge Reagan had to deflect in 1966 was that he was a dangerous Right-Wing extremist. We hear this charge made every election cycle. This book gives us a glimpse into an early version of that song. The writing is excellent and the story is captivating and important. No student of last Twentieth Century political history will want to miss it.

Kurzbeschreibung Ronald Reagan's first great victory, in the 1966 California governor's race, seemed to come from nowhere and has long since confounded his critics. Just two years earlier, when Barry Goldwater lost to Lyndon Johnson by a landslide, the conservative movement was pronounced dead. In California, Governor Edmund "Pat" Brown was celebrated as the "Giant Killer" for his 1962 victory over Richard Nixon. From civil rights, to building the modern California system of higher education, to reinventing the state's infrastructure, to a vast expansion of the welfare state, Brown's liberal agenda reigned supreme. Yet he soon found himself struggling with forces no one fully grasped, and in 1966, political neophyte Reagan trounced Brown by almost a million votes. Reagan's stunning win over Brown is one of the pivotal stories of American political history. It marked not only the coming-of-age of the conservative movement, but also the first serious blow to modern liberalism. The campaign was run amidst the drama of the Berkeley Free Speech Movement, terrible riots in Watts, and the first anti-Vietnam War protests by the New Left. It featured cameo appearances by Mario Savio, Ed Meese, California Speaker Jesse "Big Daddy" Unruh, and tough-as-nails Los Angeles Police Chief William Parker. Beneath its tumultuous surface a grassroots conservative movement swelled powerfully. A group that had once been dismissed as little more than paranoid John Birchers suddenly attracted a wide following for a more mainstream version of its message, and Reagan deftly rode the wave, moving from harsh anticommunism to a more general critique of the breakdown of social order and the failure of the welfare state. Millions of ordinary Californians heeded his call. Drawing on scores of oral history interviews, thousands of archival documents, and many personal interviews with participants, Matthew Dallek charts the rise of one great politician, the demise of another, and the clash of two diametrically opposing worldviews. He offers a fascinating new portrait of the 1960s that is far more complicated than our collective memory of that decade. The New Left activists were offset by an equally impassioned group on the other side. For every SDS organizer there was a John Birch activist; for every civil rights marcher there was an anticommunist rally-goer; for every antiwar protester there

were several more who sympathized with American aims in Southeast Asia. Dallek's compelling history offers an important reminder that the rise of Ronald Reagan and the conservatives may be the most lasting legacy of that discordant time.

When Ronald Reagan won the Republican nomination for governor of California in 1966, The New York Times called the GOP's decision "against all counsels of common sense and political prudence." That comment probably deserves to go down in history as one of the most spectacularly wrong political assessments ever to appear in a newspaper. As historian Matthew Dallek writes in *The Right Moment*, his account of Reagan's campaign against Democratic governor Pat Brown, "Ronald Reagan redefined politics like no one since Franklin Roosevelt." The future president's "stunning, out-of-nowhere victory," in which he beat Brown by nearly a million votes, altered the course of American politics for at least a generation: it signaled liberalism's descent into the fatal politics of 1970s McGovernism, announced the rebirth of the conservative movement out of the ashes of Barry Goldwater's crushing defeat two years earlier, and foreshadowed Reagan's greater accomplishments on the national stage. Before becoming governor, Reagan faced the formidable challenge of persuading mainstream voters that an affable actor could indeed perform effectively as a chief executive. But an even trickier task, in Dallek's telling, was how Reagan rescued the conservative movement from its own extremist elements. There was, for instance, the John Birch Society, a right-wing organization whose thousands of members would form a part of any successful conservative coalition, but whose leaders believed in the plainly absurd idea that President Eisenhower was a Communist agent. Reagan at once had to harness this group's energies and keep his distance from its nuttier beliefs. This he accomplished with a deftly written one-page statement repudiating some of what the group's leaders had alleged and courting their followers at the same time. By zeroing in on this half-forgotten episode of Reagan's career, Dallek shows how the consequences of one election can reverberate throughout the years. This book is almost as much about Pat Brown as it is about Ronald Reagan--fans of Ronald Radosh's *Divided They Fell*, for instance, will surely enjoy that aspect of it--but most readers will be drawn to *The Right Moment* for its detailed chronicle of how Reagan got his start in politics. --JohnJ. Miller

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