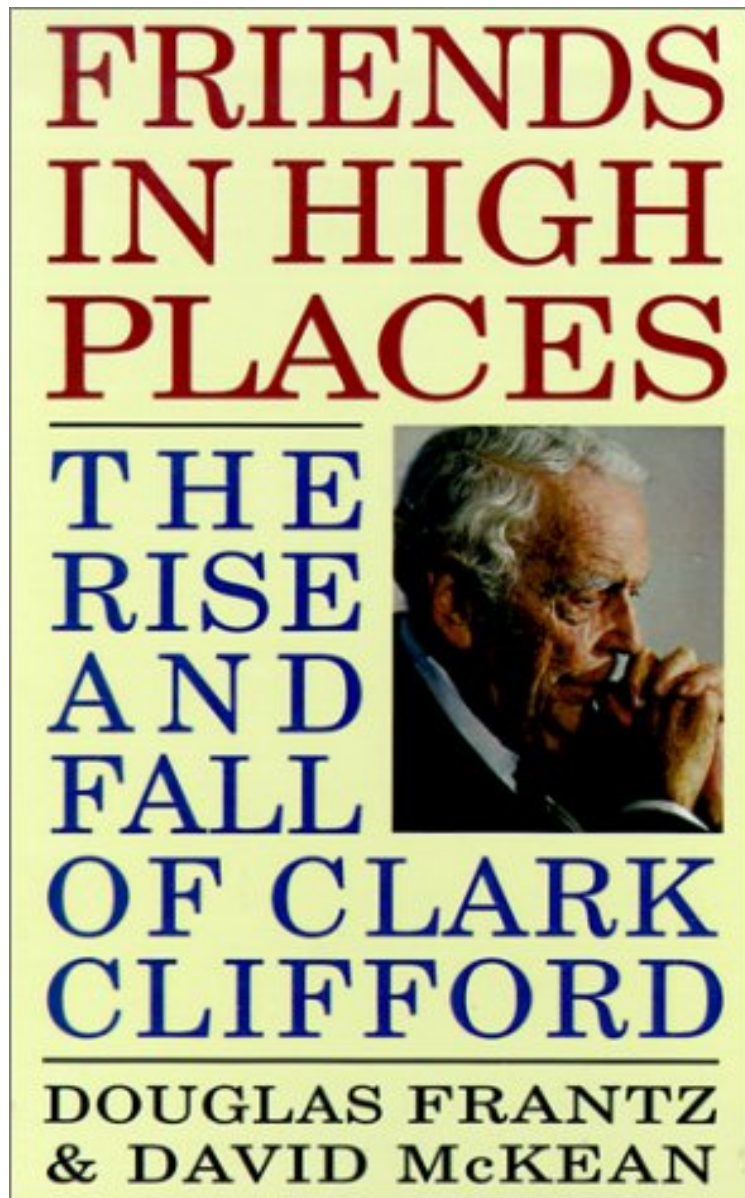


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Friends in High Places: The Rise and Fall of Clark Clifford

Douglas Frantz, David McKean
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#629796 in Books 1995-09-12Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.50 x 1.38 x 6.50l, 1.94 #File Name: 0316291625464 pages | File size: 68.Mb

Douglas Frantz, David McKean : Friends in High Places: The Rise and Fall of Clark Clifford before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Friends in High Places: The Rise and Fall of Clark Clifford:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Pretty good book about the life and times of a presidential advisor and America's first super-lobbyist/lawyerBy Mark Greenbaum"Friends in High Places" is an interesting book about

long-time presidential advisor and Secretary of Defense Clark that starts strong but gets tedious near the end and probably runs a little too long. Clifford was counsel to Harry Truman, an advisor to Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Carter, Secretary of Defense in 1968, and arguably America's first super-lobbyist/lawyer. The book chronicles his work during some of America's most interesting political times in the second half of the twentieth century, and closes with his fall from grace when he was implicated and ultimately indicted as part of the notorious BCCI banking scandal. I really enjoyed a lot of the tidbits in the book but felt that the book dragged along in its second half, and I lost considerable interest as the authors seemed to cover the same similar ground several times over. In the end, the book wasn't so much about a key presidential advisor as it was about the first giant lawyer/lobbyist in America. After reading this book, it is difficult to not appreciate that Clark Clifford had a full life. Clifford was fortunate enough not just to be witness to some of the biggest events in recent history, but he also played a key role in helping shape several of those events. For example, Clifford was arguably the strongest supporter of recognizing Israel in the Truman White House, and fought hard against George Marshall and the State Department to convince Truman of the political (the 1948 election against Dewey was approaching) and humanitarian reasons to recognize the fledgling nation in 1948. Yet the authors show that while Clifford played a role in many key presidential decisions, he also spent much of his career embellishing his role in other areas. Much attention is paid to Truman's historic 1948 victory, one which Clifford spent his entire career taking credit for plotting. In fact, Clifford was not the architect of the campaign, FDR advisor James Rowe was. Similarly, Clifford spent much time getting credit for being the one that convinced LBJ to finally begin the pullout of Vietnam, much to the anger of LBJ himself, as well as many of his other advisors. The authors argue that while these many embellishments hurt Clifford's legacy, they were not sinister by any means. My biggest problem with the book is probably that it seemed to go on for too long. Throughout the text, the authors foreshadow Clifford's eventual downfall in the BCCI scandal. This became quite tedious, at least to me. Also, they seemed to examine hundreds of specific examples where Clifford was able to use his considerable reputation and influence to help the legal clients of his small, but highly successful law/lobbying firm. After a while many of these cases seemed the same, and I think the authors could have done without going over every single one of Clifford's political and legal triumphs. Coming away from "Friends in High Places," I was struck that Clifford's biggest legacy was not so much as a presidential advisor or strategist, but rather as the nation's first super-lobbyist. The authors - whether intentionally or not - craft Clifford's work on behalf of Presidents around his work as a lawyer/lobbyist. The bulk of the text is centered on the dozens and dozens of big cases Clifford took while he was in the private sector, cases he was able to win because of his reputation from his time in the public sector. In other words, the book is about Clifford at the center of the Washington establishment, and the reputation he eventually lost a little bit at the very end of his life in the wake of the banking scandal. Clifford was able to navigate with the ease the waters of Washington, D.C. for decades, but he was unable to change his perhaps ethically-questionable-methods in the wake of Watergate, when influence peddling became much more heavily scrutinized. Good book for people interesting in learning about key Washington events from 1945 to the Reagan administration as well as the practice of super-lobbying, but beware of the many tedious details that accompany the other fascinating tales of Clark Clifford's fascinating life. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Clark Clifford showcases the importance of having friends "in high places" in Washington. Clark Clifford adroitly served his clients to obtain what they needed from legislators and government officials. What is most remarkable is the class, the poise and the reserve in which Clark Clifford conducted what in other countries would be considered illegal and inappropriate influence. IF you are interested in the whereabouts of Washington politics, this is the book to read. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Great read! By Dean A. Manson Clark Clifford was the ultimate D.C. power broker. He could open any door in the world. He knew everyone and was well liked, bright, insightful and, of course, powerful. The term "powerful" in D.C. relates to the ability of the person to achieve desired results - and that - he could do. The combined BCCI and First American Bank transactions brought him down. Sad. Well written book, a great read.

For more than forty years, Clark Clifford was Washington's consummate Democratic power broker - attorney and adviser to the nation's most influential leaders. His 1991 memoir, *Counsel to the President*, looked back on a remarkable career of public service. But the very year his autobiography was published, the Clifford legend began to crumble. Caught up in the scandal that destroyed the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, the eighty-five-year-old Clifford was arrested on charges relating to his law firm's involvement with the outlaw bank. Though his case never went to trial, and his protege, Robert Altman, was found not guilty, Clifford's reputation was in ruins. How could such a man come to such an end? What happened? And why? In *Friends in High Places*, a noted investigative reporter and a chief investigator in the Senate inquiry on BCCI provide the answers. Drawing on original documents, more than a hundred interviews with Clifford's friends and adversaries, and fifty hours of interviews with Clifford himself, the authors reveal the drive and shrewdness that led Clifford to the pinnacle of power - and demonstrate convincingly that his involvement with BCCI was no aberration, but the bitter fruit of seeds planted at the beginning.

From Publishers Weekly Born in St. Louis in 1906, Clifford ended up working at the White House during WWII as a

naval aide and soon came to the attention of fellow Missourian Harry Truman. Though he started out by organizing the President's poker games, he was soon in the middle of major decision-making: implementation of the Truman Doctrine; recognition of the State of Israel; formation of the plan behind Truman's close reelection in 1948, which, the authors contend, was the brainchild not of Clifford but of political aide James Rowe. A relentless self-promoter, Clifford went into private practice in 1950, piously claiming, "I have no influence," but he soon garnered as clients the likes of Howard Hughes, Phillips Petroleum, RCA, Revlon, DuPont and JFK, whom he defended against columnist Drew Pearson's charges of plagiarizing in Profiles in Courage. His "tumultuous tenure" as LBJ's peacenik secretary of defense during the Vietnam War is closely chronicled along with, finally, the First American/Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) scandal, for which he was indicted and later acquitted in 1993. A juicy, eye-opening look at the fascinating life of the ultimate Washington insider. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal New York Times investigative reporter Frantz and McKean, who participated in the Senate's inquiry into the Bank of Commerce and Credit International scandal that brought Clifford down, here consider how a man with so much could lose it all. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Clifford undoubtedly expected his 1991 memoir, Counsel to the President, to cement his reputation as wise grandee of the Democratic Party. But the seamy BCCI bank scandal tarnished him that year, ruined his hopes and his law firm, and paved the way for Frantz and McKean's critical but humanizing review of his life. Generally commiserative rather than carping about Clifford's past conduct, they imbue incidents with the discreet milieu of power in the 1950s and 1960s. As Truman's aide, he accepted loans (later repaid) to supplement his salary; he tendered the same favor to William Douglas, who decided cases Clifford personally argued before the Supreme Court; and even his meal ticket to fame and wealth--receiving credit for Truman's winning political strategy in 1948--is tainted, as another man devised the plan. In his favor, the authors applaud episodes such as Clifford's year as defense secretary, but they primarily accent his career as the capital's prototypical lawyer-lobbyist. Evenhanded and well written, this cautionary tale should attract flocks of politically aware readers. Gilbert Taylor