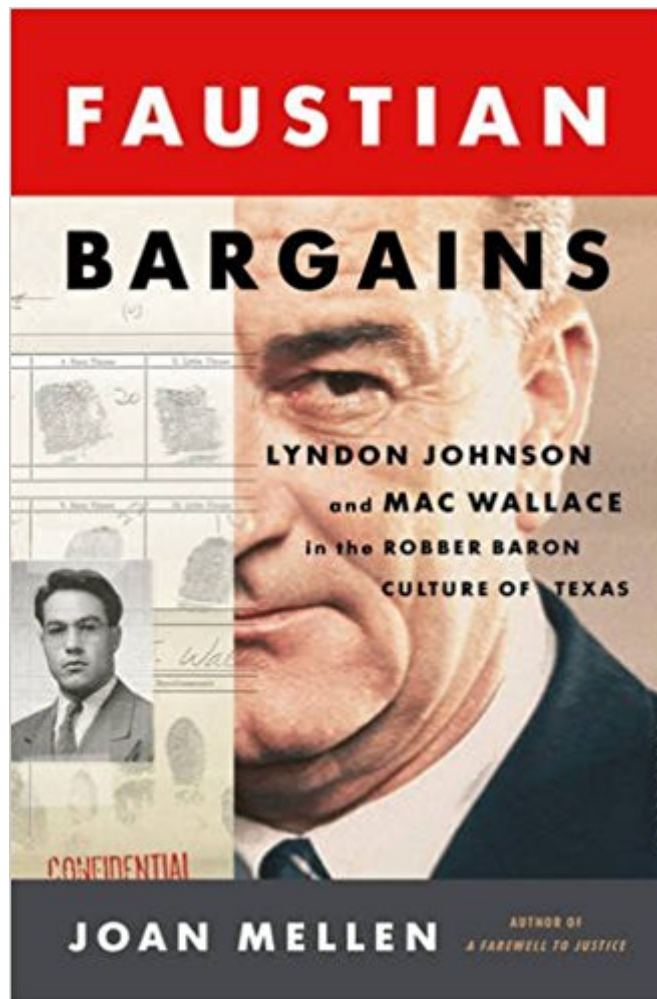


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Faustian Bargains: Lyndon Johnson And Mac Wallace In The Robber Baron Culture Of Texas



Synopsis

Perhaps no president has a more ambiguous reputation than LBJ. A brilliant tactician, he maneuvered colleagues and turned bills into law better than anyone. But he was trailed by a legacy of underhanded dealings, from his stolen Senate election in 1948 to kickbacks he artfully concealed from deals engineered with Texas wheeler-dealer Billie Sol Estes and defense contractors like his longtime supporter Brown & Root. On the verge of investigation, Johnson was reprieved when he became president upon JFK's assassination. Among the remaining mysteries has been LBJ's relationship to Mac Wallace who, in 1951, shot a Texas man having an affair with LBJ's loose-cannon sister Josefa, also Wallace's lover. When arrested, Wallace coolly said "I work for Johnson. I need to get back to Washington." Charged with murder, he was overnight defended by LBJ's powerful lawyer John Cofer, and though convicted, amazingly received a suspended sentence. He then got high-security clearance from LBJ friend and defense contractor D.H. Byrd, which the Office of Naval Intelligence tried to revoke for 11 years without success. Using crucial Life magazine and Naval Intelligence files and the unredacted FBI files on Mac Wallace, never before utilized by others, investigative writer Joan Mellen skillfully connects these two disparate Texas lives and lends stark credence to the dark side of Lyndon Johnson that has largely gone unsubstantiated.

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Customer Reviews

Author Joan Mellen has a very good reputation as a writer and scholar and she certainly does not disappoint with this latest volume. She gives a balance to books on both sides (extremes) of the

argument of LBJ's involvement in the JFK assassination and related matters- she sits comfortably between pro-conspiracy authors like Phil Nelson, Roger Stone, Craig Zirbel and Barr McClellan on the one hand, and "official history" authors Robert Caro, Robert Dallek, Doris Kearns Goodwin, and Mark Updegrove, on the other hand. In addition, everyone's favorite demon in this saga, Mac Wallace, actually comes to life as a living, breathing human being, not some two-dimensional scoundrel as portrayed (or worse, ignored) by others. Truth be told, Mellen offers some well researched "wet blankets" on a couple matters sure to disappoint the rabid LBJ-did-it crowd. Yet, in the end, she provides plenty of fodder for both sides of the aisle, so to speak. Highly recommended. It is refreshing to have a balance on history- the truth, with the bark off. Bravo, Joan!

Vince Palamara
Author of Survivor's Guilt, JFK: From Parkland to Bethesda and The Not-So-Secret Service

This is a great book pointing out how devious and corrupt LBJ was. Particularly interesting was the 1967 incident of how LBJ and Robert McNamara conspired to have the Israeli's try to sink the USS Liberty and blame Egypt. It's terrifying to realize for the second time in the 1960's how close we were to World War III. This book is wonderfully researched and documented. I look forward to meeting Joan in Dallas in November.

Well written book. I chose it because I am a fan of the JFK reminisces. I knew that Johnson had been aware of the pending murder. I wanted to understand more about his involvement in it . Or to learn that perhaps he did not have a part in it. It seemed from the book that Johnson was consumed with re-election , extraction of gold, and making millions of dollars ; not the needs of the American public. Nnhan

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