From the late 1940s to the mid-1970s, Richard Nixon was a polarizing figure in American politics, admired for his intelligence, savvy, and strategic skill, and reviled for his shady manner and cutthroat tactics. Conrad Black, whose epic biography of FDR was widely acclaimed as a masterpiece, now separates the good in Nixon—his foreign initiatives, some of his domestic policies, and his firm political hand—from the sinister, in a book likely to generate enormous attention and controversy.

Black believes the hounding of Nixon from office was partly political retribution from a lifetimes worth of enemies and Nixons misplaced loyalty to unworthy subordinates, and not clearly the consequence of crimes in which he participated. Conrad Blacks own recent legal travails, though hardly comparable, have undoubtedly given him an unusual insight into
the pressures faced by Nixon in his last two years as president and the first few years of his retirement.

**Personal Review: Richard M. Nixon: A Life in Full by Conrad Black**

I have read numerous books on Nixon. Most have been written by people that obviously did not like him. Conrad Black does a much better job of presenting both sides of the story. The beginning of the book is a bit boring, the Watergate portion a bit annoying, but overall the book is very well written and worth the read. If you are looking for a book that is anti-Nixon, look elsewhere. I will say that this book does slant towards Nixon however, with all of the anti-Nixon books it does bring some balance. The book does discuss his family, childhood, education, core beliefs, and everything else you need to know to understand him. The author is British. I believe that this is a significant advantage because he had distance from domestic politics that other authors do not have. Sometimes it is best to read an outsider's political biography because he or she does not have the memory, or built in opinions that Americans have. I would much rather read a foreigner's research on a recent President such as Clinton or Bush instead of an American's, mainly because the foreigner is removed.

I just finished reading Nixon and Kissinger by Dallek and found his book to be overly bias against both men and continued to give his opinions of what should have been done. I also like how Black, unlike Dallek, did not discount everything that Nixon did during his WH years. Yes, he made mistakes like all Presidents do because the future cannot be known. Although Black did swing several maybes to Nixon, he also points out failures during the WH years. Black does give Nixon substantial credit for China and a relaxation of tensions with Moscow. Dallek instead seemed to point out that neither were Nixon's doing and that he was more or less lucky. Dallek also painted Nixon as an uneducated man and a fool and incompetent.

Black also gives Nixon credit for reestablishing relations with China even though some of his conservative supporters were against him. Dallek also continued to berate Nixon for not caring about domestic issues such as desegregation and the poor. However, Nixon was actually on the forefront of these issues since childhood, and Black gives him (and especially LBJ) credit for improvements on civil rights. Nixon was a strange and misunderstood man. However, he did have a major impact in American history. Although I know Democrats hate him, he did establish the EPA and OSHA, and he did end the war in SE Asia that was already started when he came into office (people can claim it was not quick enough, but it was a difficult situation that none of us can understand or know how we would react especially if we did not know how events would unfold).

I highly recommend this book. I do recommend the Dallek book too. It is important to read several sides to understand the full picture. However, I do feel that Nixon and Kissinger is very biased and does not give either
man credit. It was apparent to me within the first 10 pages that he really
did not like either and tried to reduce both men's reputation and
accomplishments. Black did promote Nixon more but he unlike Dallek is a
foreigner and did not have the same experiences that swayed his opinions.

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