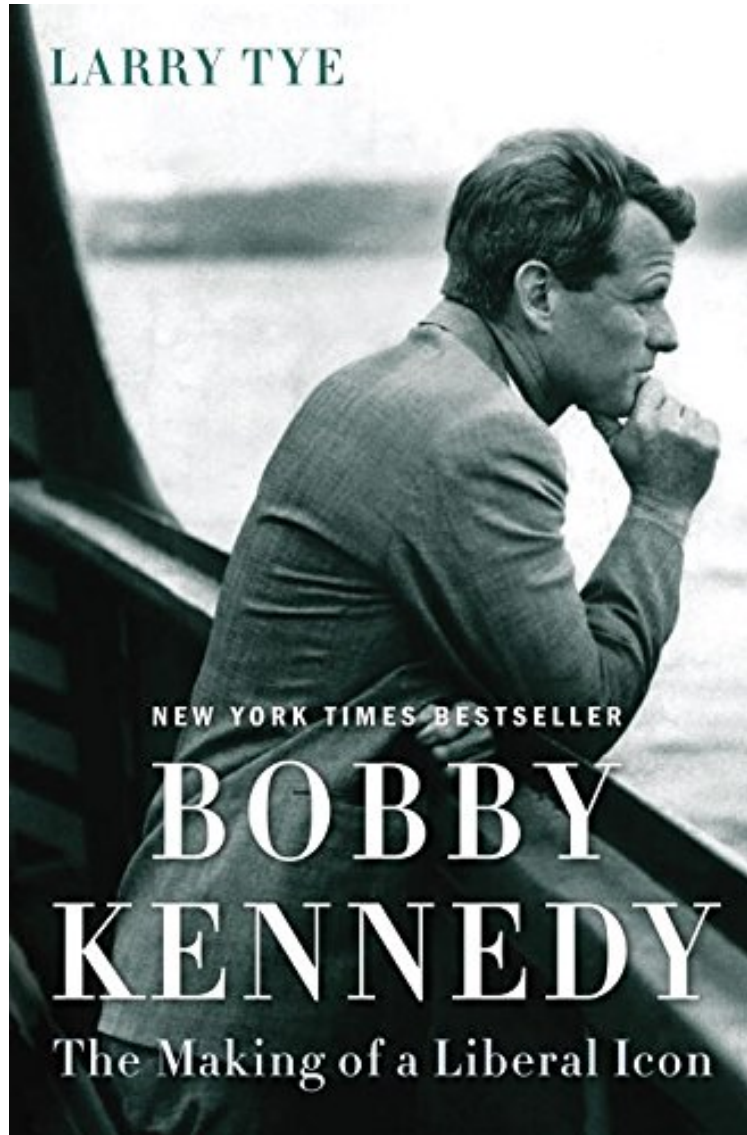


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Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon

Larry Tye

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Larry Tye : Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon:

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. Well Done Oh Good And Faithful Servant By Bill Emblom I have read previous books on Robert Kennedy and found them all interesting but I feel this one is the definitive biography of the man. Author Larry Tye gives a well-balanced portrayal of the man showing both his so-called ruthless side with other politicians and his compassionate side with children and the poor. I suppose to have lived through the

tumultuous 1960s and well remember many of the times and trials this decade put American through would make this book somewhat more memorable. Bobby Kennedy was a strong supporter of Senator Joe McCarthy of Wisconsin during the witch hunt for Communists during the early 1950s. The drive of father Joseph Kennedy to get his oldest surviving son Jack elected president is covered. The bitter feud between Attorney General RFK and Vice-President Lyndon Johnson suddenly left the Attorney General insignificant in Johnson's eyes. Bobby's friend Richard Goodwin has said that if LBJ had to choose between RFK and Ho Chi Minh to succeed him as president he'd choose Ho without hesitation. Another archfoe was Clyde Tolson, friend of J. Edgar Hoover, who had stated, "I hope someone shoots and kills that son of a bitch." RFK had many enemies but he had his compassionate side as well and author Tye provides us this side, also.. Following the assassination of JFK his brother went into a deep depression which eventually subsided with RFK's run for Senator of New York and later for President of the United States. His travels took him to the deep south and Indian reservations where poverty reigned. Kennedy's sincere compassion deeply affected him to wanting to do something for these people. Robert Kennedy's words from the 1960s ring equally true today when he stated that what we need today is not division, hatred, violence, or lawlessness but love, wisdom, and compassion for one another. It appears we haven't learned very much if anything. Unfortunately his life was taken by an assassin just like his brother's. I learned a lot from this book and I'm sure I'd learn more if I read it again. Well done oh good and faithful servant.

71 of 76 people found the following review helpful. An honest portrayal of a complicated man. By Anthony Sanchez Let me first admit that I am a fan of John and Robert Kennedy since my childhood. In my extended family, JFK was spoken about as a member of the family. I have clear memories of each brother's deaths. But, I do not read biographies of them or the Kennedys with an uncritical eye for books that are either written as too much a love letter or for baseless attacks. This new book by Larry Tye is gratefully one that deserves the highest praise. I received my copy as a pre-publication ebook. That format provided me quick access to the many footnotes in each chapter and I enjoyed how the footnotes were often so interesting as to make me wonder why many of them were not simply inserted in the main text. The author obviously worked hard at this biography unlike some other authors who mostly wrote their works by reading other authors and watching documentaries. It includes numerous interviews and readings of materials not previously provided to others including from Ethel Kennedy's thoughts and documents. Tye gives us the main points of Kennedy's inspirational South African Ripple of Hope speech for which I don't off hand recall before reading. He also goes more in depth with the significance of RFK's term as senator than what other biographers have provided. But be clear that the author does not shy away from impressing upon the reader the misjudgments and sometimes angry behaviors by Robert Kennedy. This includes his defense of Joe McCarthy. Or how he worked himself into a frenzy to best an opponent. Bobby never denied wanting to come out on top, although he never understood how slippery the slope was between fervor and fanaticism. Overall, the author is an obvious fan but not one who is fearful of noticing his subject's faults. In the acknowledgments section, the author quotes a former Kennedy aide's advice to the author, Write a good book, because he was a good man who deserves a good book. There have been several books on RFK that I have read over the many years that were very interesting, but I would say that Tye's book is now the one that can be called a good book for a good man.

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A balanced portrait of an heroic figure with a dark side. By Mal Warwick During his years in the public eye in the 1950s and 60s, Bobby Kennedy was as controversial a figure as anyone else in American history. Millions despised him because he worked for Senator Joseph McCarthy. Millions more loathed him for his role in supporting the civil rights movement. Yet other Americans lionized him as the uncompromising liberal he was viewed as in the final years of his life. Little wonder that most biographers have veered either sharply left or sharply right in painting a portrait of this endlessly complex man. In Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon, journalist Larry Tye steers a careful middle course. The result is a balanced and insightful biography of one of the most significant figures on the American stage in the mid-twentieth century. The man known as RFK Today, the man known as RFK is closely identified with his brother, President John F. Kennedy, who has cast a much longer shadow over American history. As Tye makes abundantly clear, the two were different in a great many ways: in age, stature, temperament, and political perspective. JFK was eight years older and three inches taller Bobby was considered the runt of the large Kennedy litter and the younger man bore grudges for decades. His older brother was far more pragmatic and much less prone to anger. As an adult, managing Jack's first race for the U.S. Senate in 1952, Bobby gained a reputation as ruthless that stayed with him for the remainder of his life. Tye insists that the label was misplaced. Bobby was as intelligent as Jack, although less of an intellectual; Jack had Bobby's toughness, although he was better at disguising it. And Tye reveals Bobby to have been an inspiring boss at the Justice Department, a caring father and wife whom he loved passionately, and genuinely compassionate with the disadvantaged people he met along the campaign trail. Still, Bobby was notorious for the abiding hatred he possessed for a long list of enemies, including J. Edgar Hoover, Joe McCarthy's pit bull Roy Cohn, Jimmy Hoffa, and Lyndon Johnson. However, much of his reputation for ruthlessness stemmed from his willingness to follow evidence of wrongdoing even among his friends. During his three years as attorney general, his office prosecuted two congressmen, three state supreme court justices, five mayors, two chiefs of police, and three sheriffs all Democrats. Bobby Kennedy's evolution from Right to Left Now, nearly half a century after Kennedy's death, many of the passions have cooled, and long-secret archives have been opened. It's now possible to view the man's life in greater

perspective. Biographer and journalist Larry Tye has accomplished just that, steering a steady course between the extremes in *Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon*. As the title suggests, Tye's theme is Kennedy's evolution under fire as his brother's campaign manager, anti-Communist zealot, no-holds-barred Senate investigator, Attorney General, U.S. Senator, and, finally, presidential candidate. Beginning public life identified with the Right, he came to its end less than two decades later as the bright new hope of the Left. Bobby Kennedy is not easy to pigeonhole. Notwithstanding Kennedy's popularity with the Left in 1968, it would be a mistake to pigeonhole him as a liberal. True, he was fiercely committed to ending poverty in America, and he had emerged as a champion of civil rights for African-Americans, albeit slowly and reluctantly. However, like his brother, RFK would have been horrified if asked to support the sort of policies advanced in 2016 by Senator Bernie Sanders. He was, if anything, pro-business, fiercely anti-Communist, a fervent supporter of the Cold War, and committed to economic policies that today might well be considered conservative. Skip this if you know the history. In 1968, Robert F. Kennedy was poised for election to the White House when an assassin's bullet cut him down at the age of 42. His victory was by no means assured, but he had just won the California primary and seemed on track to a showdown with Vice President Hubert Humphrey at the Democratic Convention. Given the intense popular hatred for the Vietnam War and Humphrey's continuing support for Lyndon Johnson's policies, it's clear that the contest would have gone down to the wire, at the very least. Instead, as history shows, Humphrey emerged with the nomination bloodied by the tumultuous events that surrounded the 1968 convention. Had Kennedy won the nomination instead, or had Humphrey won in a fair fight, it seems highly likely that Richard Nixon would have gone down to defeat. Even heavily handicapped as he was, Humphrey came exceedingly close to winning. About the author: Boston journalist Larry Tye is the author of seven nonfiction books, three of which are biographies. His previous subjects were Edward L. Bernays, the father of public relations, and the legendary Negro League pitcher Satchel Paige.

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER From the author of *Satchel* comes an in-depth, vibrant, and measured biography about the most complex and controversial member of the Kennedy family. **NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY THE WASHINGTON POST** History remembers Robert F. Kennedy as a racial healer, a tribune for the poor, and the last progressive knight of a bygone era of American politics. But Kennedy's enshrinement in the liberal pantheon was actually the final stage of a journey that had its beginnings in the conservative 1950s. In *Bobby Kennedy*, Larry Tye peels away layers of myth and misconception to paint a complete portrait of this singularly fascinating figure. To capture the full arc of his subject's life, Tye draws on unpublished memoirs, unreleased government files, and fifty-eight boxes of papers that had been under lock and key for the past forty years. He conducted hundreds of interviews with RFK intimates including Bobby's widow, Ethel, his sister Jean, and his aide John Siegenthal, many of whom have never spoken to another biographer. Tye's determination to sift through the tangle of often contradictory opinions means that Bobby Kennedy will stand as the definitive one-volume biography of a man much beloved, but just as often misunderstood. Bobby Kennedy's transformation from cold warrior to fiery liberal is a profoundly moving personal story that also offers a lens onto two of the most chaotic and confounding decades of twentieth-century American history. The first half of RFK's career underlines what the country was like in the era of Eisenhower, while his last years as a champion of the underclass reflect the seismic shifts wrought by the 1960s. Nurtured on the rightist orthodoxies of his dynasty-building father, Bobby Kennedy began his public life as counsel to the red-baiting senator Joseph McCarthy. He ended it with a noble campaign to unite working-class whites with poor blacks and Latinos in an electoral coalition that seemed poised to redraw the face of presidential politics. Along the way, he turned up at the center of every event that mattered, from the Bay of Pigs and the Cuban Missile Crisis to race riots and Vietnam. Bare-knuckle operative, cynical White House insider, romantic visionary: Bobby Kennedy was all of these things at one time or another, and each of these aspects of his personality emerges in the pages of this powerful and perceptive new biography. **Praise for Bobby Kennedy** We are in Larry Tye's debt for bringing back to life the young presidential candidate who . . . for a brief moment, almost half a century ago, instilled hope for the future in angry, fearful Americans. *David Nasaw, The New York Times Book Review* Sweeping . . . [Tye] captures RFK's rise and fall with straightforward prose bolstered by impressive research. Along with hundreds of interviews with Kennedy intimates, including his widow, Ethel, Tye sifted through unpublished memoirs, unreleased government files, and boxes of Kennedy papers that had been locked away for some forty years. *USA Today* Tye (Superman) shows how RFK was not always the progressive hero but a work in progress: after all, Kennedy worked for Joseph McCarthy for a spell. Tye's pages on the assassination are heart-wrenching. *New York Post* This biography will appeal not only to those wanting a portrait of a dynamic idealist, but also to those seeking to understand the emotions of the times in which he lived. *Henry A. Kissinger*

Larry Tye has done his homework. He has read the books and articles, interviewed hundreds of family members, friends, colleagues and acquaintances, and made use of newly released materials in the Kennedy Library and elsewhere to produce a nuanced, balanced, affectionate and mostly favorable portrait. . . . [Tye] presents us . . . with a kind of bildungsroman of a young, privileged man who is forced to learn on the job and makes mistakes. . . . We are in

Larry Tye's debt for bringing back to life the young presidential candidate who . . . for a brief moment, almost half a century ago, instilled hope for the future in angry, fearful Americans. David Nasaw, *The New York Times Book Review* . . . [Tye] captures RFK's rise and fall with straightforward prose bolstered by impressive research. Along with hundreds of interviews with Kennedy intimates, including his widow, Ethel, Tye sifted through unpublished memoirs, unreleased government files, and boxes of Kennedy papers that had been locked away for some forty years. USA Today Mr. Tye's account is nuanced and thorough, and he manages the rare feat of interviewing Kennedy's widow Ethel, now eighty-eight. . . . [RFK's] vision echoes through the decades. Only those who dare to fail greatly can ever achieve greatly, he said in 1966. If only modern-day leaders were so bold. The Economist Bobby Kennedy, who was assassinated during his 1968 presidential campaign, is remembered for his antiwar stance and for standing up for civil rights and against poverty. But Tye (Superman) shows how RFK was not always the progressive hero but a work in progress after all, Kennedy worked for Joseph McCarthy for a spell. Tye's pages on the assassination are heart-wrenching. New York Post Like Alexander Hamilton during our nation's founding, [Bobby] Kennedy was the most dominant figure of his time not to be elected president. . . . Tye has crafted a multi-layered, inspiring portrait of RFK. Because the author refuses to avert his eyes from the uglier chapters in Kennedy's life, he provides readers and historians their most in-depth look at an extraordinary figure whose transformational story shaped America at mid-century. The Washington Post Very, very good . . . It captures RFK's cold, ruthless side with appropriate relish, and it provides fast-paced and very detailed accounts of RFK's early working relationship with soon-to-be-disgraced politician Joe McCarthy. Christian Science Monitor Fascinating . . . The book is most successful in tracing Kennedy's transition from a brash, patrician lawyer to a skilled liberal politician who overwhelmingly identified with those in the greatest need. AP News Tye's vivid journalistic style makes the biography an arresting read. . . . Bobby Kennedy's journey closely mirrors the history of the country, from the Cold War through the civil rights movement, the dissent against the Vietnam War and growing public awareness of poverty in America. . . . Many of the most fascinating stories come through Tye's dissection of Bobby's relations with his adversaries. San Francisco Chronicle Absorbing . . . a captivating account of the political career of Robert F. Kennedy, from his years as a zealous communist hunter for Joe McCarthy through the 1968 presidential campaign during which he was assassinated at age forty-two. For this state-of-the-art political biography, Tye conducted four hundred interviews with people who worked with Kennedy. He also had access to national archives. The author's admiration for his subject shows, but this is no hagiography. . . . Shedding new light on Kennedy's relationships with Lyndon Johnson and Martin Luther King, Jr., Tye ultimately reveals Kennedy as a work in progress who, by the end of his life, had become a beloved advocate for minorities and the poor. Library Journal (starred review) The trouble with calling someone iconic is that the truth is often obscured under layers of mythology. . . . Through extensive conversations with Bobby's widow, Ethel, and far-reaching interviews with key aides, colleagues, close friends, and ideological adversaries, Tye unflinchingly illustrates the evolution of a statesman who captured the imagination of a generation and whose assassination galvanized a nation. . . . Even-handed and probing, Tye's perceptive analysis of RFK's career and its impact avoids the hagiographic tone frequently associated with Kennedy biographies to provide a complete portrait of a complex man whose contributions to history were essential and whose potential will remain forever unknowable. Booklist (starred review) It is difficult to envision anyone getting Robert F. Kennedy more right than biographer [Larry] Tye does in this superb book. Tye beautifully captures Kennedy's contradictions, his emergence from under the hard-to-like father to whom he remained forever loyal, and his growth into a public figure killed by an assassin's bullet. . . . Tye equitably concedes that Kennedy's detractors have much reason to be tough on the man, and his clear depiction of Kennedy's many blemishes is just one of the book's many fine qualities. Another is its wonderful readability. In the end, Tye's subject stands forth as an admirable man. Publishers Weekly (starred review) A comprehensive, thesis-driven account . . . richly researched . . . Relying on countless interviews, including the contributions of RFK's widow, Tye weaves a compelling story of Bobby's changes: his growth from the ruthless image his political enemies attached to him to the committed humanitarian, the friend of African-Americans, the enemy of poverty, and the outspoken opponent of the Vietnam War. Kirkus This is not just another Bobby Kennedy book. It is the definitive biography of one of America's most compelling political figures. Larry Tye has given us the complete Bobby, from the Bad (Early) Kennedy to the Good (Later) Kennedy, from Joe McCarthy's committee counsel to ruthless political manager to gentle, softhearted presidential candidate. Tye's book rests on prodigious and original research, including rare, on-the-record interviews with Bobby's widow, Ethel, who confesses that seeing Bobby for the first time was like meeting George Clooney. Roger Mudd, winner of the Peabody Award and former co-anchor of NBC Nightly News Robert Kennedy led one of the great unfinished lives in American history. With skill and verve, Larry Tye has written a fascinating account of a transformative figure who continues to summon us to heed our better angels even all these years distant. Jon Meacham, Pulitzer Prizewinning author of *Thomas Jefferson: The Art of Power* Drawing on the personal papers and insights of the Kennedy family, this biography will appeal not only to those wanting a portrait of a dynamic idealist, but also to those seeking to understand the emotions of the times in which he lived. Henry A. Kissinger Dreamy and calculating, joyful and sad, hard and soft, good and bad, Bobby Kennedy remains one of history's fascinating and elusive figures. In this fair, lively, and insightful biography, Larry Tye makes him real. Evan Thomas, *New York*

Times bestselling author of *Robert Kennedy: His Life* and *Being Nixon: A Man Divided* Larry Tye, with the eye of a good reporter and the diligence of an accomplished scholar, writes a fascinating, timely report on the other Kennedy—the one named Bobby, who started out supporting Joe McCarthy and died fighting in the anti-Vietnam War crusade. Bobby has always deserved a crackerjack bio. Tye has delivered it. Marvin Kalb, senior adviser at the Pulitzer Center and author of *Imperial Gamble: Putin, Ukraine, and the New Cold War* About the Author Larry Tye has been an award-winning journalist at *The Boston Globe* and a Nieman Fellow at Harvard University. He now runs a Boston-based training program for medical journalists. He is the author of the New York Times bestseller *Satchel*, as well as *Superman*, *The Father of Spin*, *Home Lands*, and *Rising from the Rails*, and co-author, with Kitty Dukakis, of *Shock*. He lives in Massachusetts. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 Cold Warrior Disciples came in flocks that sun-baked May afternoon in 1957, packing the pews at St. Marys and spilling onto the streets outside the Irish parish in Appleton, Wisconsin, where Joseph Raymond McCarthy had been baptized and now, just forty-eight years later, he was being eulogized. It was the last of three memorials to the fallen senator and the first in the state that had elected him in landslides. Twenty-five thousand admirers from Green Bay, Neenah, and his native Grand Chute had paid their respects at his open casket. Others were keeping vigil outside the church alongside honor guards of military police and Boy Scouts. Flying in to join them were nineteen senators, seven congressmen, and other luminaries, most of whom had supported Joe McCarthy in his relentless assault on Communism. The dignitaries were whisked in a motorcade from the airport in Green Bay to the funeral in Appleton. But one man faltered on the runway. Robert Francis Kennedy had worked as an aide to McCarthy for seven months before political and personal calculations made him step aside. Now he sat anxiously by himself on the military jet, reluctant to be seen with the conservative lawmakers and conflicted even about being in Wisconsin. His own brother, Jack, had sternly warned him to stay away. When the crowd was gone, Kennedy slipped down the exit ramp unnoticed. Nobody was waiting because no one knew he was coming. He rode into town not with the pack of senators and congressmen but in the front seat of a Cadillac convertible driven by the reporter Edwin Bayley, who was covering McCarthys funeral for the *Milwaukee Journal*. At the church, Bobby sat in the choir loft, distracted and alone, and at the graveside he stood apart from the rest of the officials from Washington. When the service was over, Kennedy asked Bayley and other journalists not to write about his being there. The reporters, already in the Kennedy thrall, did as he asked. The relationship between Robert Kennedy and Joseph McCarthy is one of the most implausible in U.S. political history. In the lexicon of American politics, the Kennedy name is shorthand for left-leaning Democratic politics, and it is a tenet of Kennedy scholarship that the first and archetypal family liberal was Bobby. The historical cliché, nourished by his family and friends, posits that Kennedys going to work for McCarthy was a footnote or an aberration when it was neither. The truth is that the early Bobby Kennedy embraced the overheated anticommunism of the 1950s and openly disdained liberals. His job with the Republican senator from Wisconsin not only launched Bobbys career but injected into his life passion and direction that had been glaringly absent. McCarthys zeal, extreme though it was, fired Kennedys ambition for years to come. He quit McCarthy not because he rejected McCarthyism, but because his advancement was stymied by conflict with fellow staffers. While he did work for the senator for just seven and a half months in 1953, their ties went back a number of years, and they lasted until Bobby made his last visit to McCarthy shortly before the senator died. His link to McCarthy became a crucible Kennedy couldnt escape, serving for some as a testament to his loyalty and patriotism, for others as a measure of his youthful misdirection and overreaching. Both were right. Bobby was so enamored of the senator that he failed to see the fanaticism that, by the time he signed on, had already made McCarthys name a synonym for witch hunt and crowned Low-Blow Joe the most divisive man in America. Nor did he ever fully sever those bonds or entirely break the bad habits he learned from the senator from Grand Chute. Yet if Bobby was guilty of embracing or tolerating the Red Scare, so, too, was much of the nation in the 1950s. In the end, this McCarthy phase of his life would be a baseline from which to measure Bobbys and Americas political transformation and growth. To appreciate how he reached that baseline we need to go back to Bobbys beginnings. The story of Americas First Family has been recounted so many times that it is part of American mythology. Nearly everyone knows some version of the dogged-upstart-to-fat-cat, East Boston to West Wing tale. But Robert Kennedys pivotal place in that narrative is seldom acknowledged. Overlooked especially is his ongoing and all-important relationship with his father, Joe, and the fact that it was Bobby who was most like him and best suited to take over his leadership of the clan. Even Joe didnt get it at first. Autocratic, magnetic, and unflinchingly family-focused, Joseph Patrick Kennedy was the model for all nine of his children, but particularly the boys. His upbringing set the pattern for theirs, and his single-minded pursuit of wealth and influence served as a template for what his four sons and the third most of all would accomplish in the political realm. Joes roots ran deep both in his native Massachusetts, where the WASP establishment ruled the landscape into which he was born in 1888, and in his ancestral Ireland, whose call Joe never escaped. Yet the great patriarchs tale is not quite the Horatio Alger version that most of us think it to be. He was a self-starter but was not self-made. His father, Patrick Joseph Kennedy, was one of Bostons most influential and fair-minded political chieftains, serving five one-year terms in the Massachusetts House of Representatives and two two-year stints in the state Senate. He spent still longer as a Democratic ward boss, a post from which he could dole out offices, jobs, and favors in a capital city dominated by Democrats and, increasingly, by

Irishmen. While politics was P.J.'s passion, it was his business acumen that gave him the time and resources to indulge it. He started life working with his hands as a brass fitter, then a stevedore. By his early thirties, the teetotaling Kennedy was a partner in three saloons, owner of two retail liquor stores, president of the Sumner Savings Bank, and founder of the Suffolk Coal Company, all of which afforded his wife, Mary Augusta, a life even more comfortable than the one she had grown up with as the daughter of a prosperous Irish-born contractor. She, in turn, pampered her four children—the baby, Margaret Louise, preceded by Mary Loretta, Francis Benedict, and Joseph Patrick. Patrick charted a purposeful path for his first and favored child, Joe. Attending Catholic schools for his first six years gave Joe a grounding in his culture along with his faith. By grade seven, it was time for him to learn about the Brahmins who really ran things in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. There was a world of inherited fortunes where it was said that the Lowells talked only to the Cabots, while the Cabots talked only to God. P.J. had begun to infiltrate that rarefied terrain but, like most hyphenated Americans, he had to defer the dream of true mastery to his son. For now, that meant enrolling Joe at Boston Latin, the country's oldest and the city's most rigorous public school, whose alumni included four Massachusetts governors and five signers of the Declaration of Independence. Young Joseph Kennedy did passably well there, but the faculty recommended he repeat his senior year if he hoped to get into Harvard College, which to Patrick was the point of his sons being at Latin. Following his teachers advice, Joe stayed on. He was elected class president, reelected captain of the baseball team, and despite three Cs, five Ds, and two Fs on his entrance exams admitted to Harvard, with conditions. Latin's class of 1908 sent twenty-five students to Harvard, which was half of its graduates and more than any other secondary school anywhere. Few were as self-satisfied as the strapping redhead with freckled cheeks and searing blue eyes. Joe's marks at college were sufficiently high to get him off probation but not nearly enough to get him onto the Deans List, though that meant less to him than finally making it as a backup on the baseball team. The Hasty Pudding took him in but not the tonier clubs such as the Porcellian, where legend had it that if members didn't earn their first million by age forty, the club would give it to them. Just being at Harvard was a coup for the grandson of a potato farmer from County Wexford and the son of a saloonkeeper but it wasn't enough for Joe, who could rattle off the stigmata that limited his mobility in Harvard's Protestant temple of traditionalism. He was Irish and Catholic. He had graduated from a public school, not a prep school. He neither came from inherited riches nor had quite enough of the nouveau kind. The only circumstance he could change was the last, and before graduation Joe and a friend launched a sightseeing bus business that netted them \$5,000, or \$126,000 in today's dollars. Not bad for a summer job. Joe's school years set the formula for his career in business: Barrel through doors your dad opened; trust your instinct; never fully confide in anybody; use somebody else's money; and snap up bargains others don't, because they are either too shortsighted or too scrupulous. Barely a year after he graduated from Harvard, Boston newspapers were reporting on Joe's takeover of the Columbia Trust Company in East Boston. At age twenty-five, he was the youngest bank president in America. (Less ink was given to how small the bank was, how Patrick had been a minority owner from the start, and how relatives and neighbors lent Joe the money to scoop up a controlling interest.) His next enterprise—helping run Bethlehem Steels shipyard outside Boston during World War I—netted fewer headlines but made Joe a useful friend in Assistant Secretary of the Navy Franklin D. Roosevelt. If phase one of his career might be titled *Father Knows Best*, the second chapter warrants an even simpler rubric: *Go Where the Money Is*. Joe bankrolled movie theaters, then films, in Hollywood when the motion picture business was desperate for cash in the mid-1920s, and he walked away with \$5 million in profits and screen siren Gloria Swanson as his mistress. He was an astute speculator during the stock market's most roaring ride ever, and he was one of the few investors canny enough to cash in before it crashed on the infamous Black Tuesday, October 29, 1929. With help from FDR's son James, Joe wangled the rights to import Haig Haig Scotch and other premium whiskies at the very moment Prohibition was ending in 1933 and a thirsty public was lining up at the bar. So what if he personally abhorred the stereotype of Irish booziness and never drank beyond moderation? This was a matter of money. He even lent William Randolph Hearst a hand in reorganizing his media empire in 1937. As for suspicions that he made his millions working the shady side of the street—raiding companies, short-selling stocks, and bootlegging—they seldom were raised in his presence or substantiated, in part because he was so cagey about his increasingly lucrative investments. Joe's prototype was no longer his affable father, but the frosty Yankees who had blackballed him at Harvard. Add in all his other deals, as *Fortune* magazine would in 1957, and Joe had amassed somewhere between \$200 million and \$400 million—enough to make him the wealthiest Irish American on earth. That same year *The Saturday Evening Post* estimated his stock market earnings alone at between \$45 million and \$700 million. Managing his estate, the *Post* added, was a full-time occupation for twenty-odd investment counselors, tax experts, and bookkeepers, all searching for safe havens for the payouts from Joe's high-risk investments. Whatever the true size of his fortune, it was almost certainly enough, in today's dollars, to make him a billionaire. As far back as the 1930s, just twenty years after graduating from Harvard, he had eclipsed the holdings of most members of the millionaires-by-forty Porcellian Club. For Joe, the best thing about being rich was that it freed him to pursue his true passion, public affairs, just as his father's more modest earnings had liberated him to do so a generation before. Joe Kennedy's vision for himself and the world was substantially more audacious and unfiltered than P.J.'s. Joe meant to serve his country in a way that would make clear his standing in its highest echelons. His enabler was his friend from the shipyard days, now President

Franklin Roosevelt, who in 1934 named Joe chairman of the newly minted Securities and Exchange Commission. Liberals howled, calling Kennedy a conniving capitalist whose appointment ensured that the agency would fail in its mission to rein in the out-of-control stock markets that had helped plunge the country into the Great Depression. FDR, however, grasped what they didnt: Joe was one of the very few bulls of Wall Street who realized that the New Deal was the best deal they were going to get and accepted the necessity of its regulations. While Kennedy stayed in the job just fifteen months, that was long enough to prove the president right. An adept executive, Joe managed to sell his fellow denizens of big business on the new rules without watering down those standards. Time magazine, in a cover story on Joe shortly before he resigned, called his SEC the most ably administered New Deal agency in Washington. Joe delighted in that verdict, shared even by reporters who had railed against his appointment, although he had no illusions about why Roosevelt had named him: He knew that I knew all the angles of trading ... all the intricacies and trickeries of market manipulation. FDR put it more succinctly: Set a thief to catch a thief. Joe returned to his businesses after his stint at the SEC, but his days in the nations capital reinforced a lesson he had learned from his father and would pass on to his sons: Getting the plum jobs he itched for required scratching backs, New Deal or old. And so as FDR faced another election in 1936, fearing that his White House was perceived as antibusiness, Joe again set aside his doubts about big government and marshaled his clout with the business community on behalf of Roosevelt. I have no political ambitions for myself or for my children, he wrote disingenuously in a slim self-published book entitled Im for Roosevelt that was widely distributed two months before the election. It derided the unreasoning malicious ill-will displayed by the rich and powerful against our common leader, and it argued in this instance genuinely that the future happiness of America, which means to me the future happiness of my family, will best be served by the re-election of President Roosevelt.