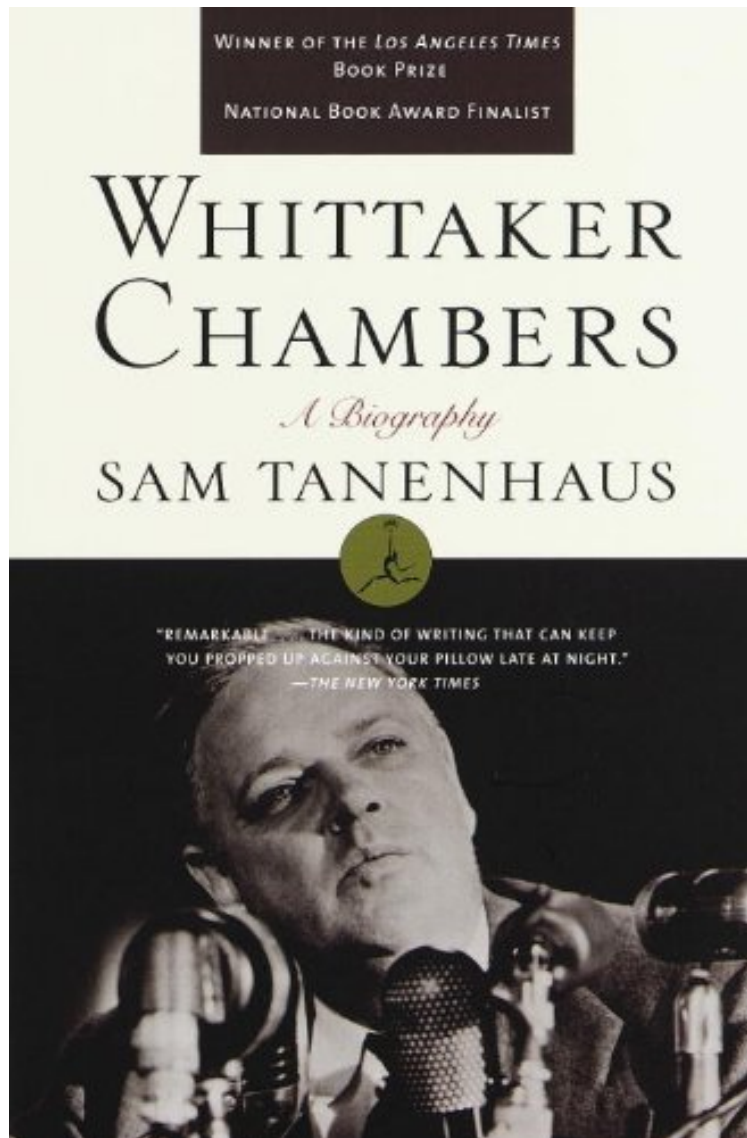


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Whittaker Chambers: A Biography

Von Sam Tanenhaus

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Von Sam Tanenhaus : Whittaker Chambers: A Biography before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Whittaker Chambers: A Biography:

KundenrezensionenHilfreichste Kundenrezensionen0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Material on the New Deal era is especially good!Von Ein KundeThis is a fascinating book. The material on the Congressional investigation and the subsequent trials of Alger Hiss is well-written, and holds attention even for someone who already knows the material.But what is new and important about this book, it seems to me, is its discussion of the New Deal

and the struggles inside the Agriculture Adjustment Administration (AAA). Why would the Soviets recruit spies within the AAA, one might ask? Wouldn't they be much more interested in the departments of State and War? Well, yes. But they saw the AAA as a farm club. They understood that many of the bright young men working on boring-sounding policies such as cotton quotas were going places and, perhaps, in time to sensitive places. In the case of Alger Hiss and some others, this recruitment policy proved well founded. The discussion of the cotton quota, on pp. 104-07, is indeed fascinating on many levels. It is a case study of the politics within many an administrative bureaucracy. And it proves to have surprising relevance to the eventual perjury trials, as one sees when some testimony of Felix Frankfurter is quoted on p. 375. Anybody interested in the substantive economic policies of the New Deal, the continuing debates about their unwisdom, and their unintended effects both at the time and much later, should get this book. It does have some boring patches, though (hence four stars instead of five). It is easy enough to skim past them and still get everything of value, which is here in great quantities. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. A thorough treatment of a man and his period in history... Von Lisa Schweitzer Tanenhaus has done superb work: his biography of Chambers is methodically documented and beautifully crafted. He challenges us readers who are used to the black and white moral harangue of character sketches to understand the shades of grey in the Hiss/Chambers episode, the anti-Communist fervor following the hearings and trials, and the personalities involved (e.g. Chambers, Hiss, their wives, and Richard Nixon, to name only a few). Tanenhaus gives us no easy answers and forces us to think that 1) just because some were maliciously and falsely named as Communist spies doesn't mean that every one accused was innocent; and 2) a man who can lie can also tell the truth. If anything, Tanenhaus is somewhat too loyal to Mr. Chambers. Alger Hiss's character is less well developed in this book than I wanted as a longtime student of the Hiss/Chambers affair. It is reasonable, though, that Hiss was somewhat the privileged, pretty-boy smartass Tanenhaus portrays Hiss to be. Tanenhaus thankfully doesn't indulge himself much in his personal feelings. He sticks closely to the evidence and remembers that being a richboy like Hiss is not justly punishable by 44 months in the federal pen, just as being a slovenly, fat, and uncharismatic little man like Chambers doesn't preclude literary brilliance or profound courage. I never expected to like--or even understand--Mr. Chambers, but by the end of this book, I did both. 0 von 0 Kunden fanden die folgende Rezension hilfreich. Requiem for an American patriot Von John C. Mckee The Hiss-Chambers affair continues to reverberate through the years. This event set in motion the career of Richard Nixon to national prominence, set the stage for much of the anti-Communist debate and policy decisions of the government, destroyed many careers and poisoned the relations among many intellectuals along the lines of what side they took. Sam Tanenhaus very efficiently shows the many faceted personality of Whittaker Chambers, from his undeniable brilliance (got the library and find a back copy of TIME and read some of his book reviews to see this firsthand - excellent review of Finnegans Wake) to his well deserved paranoia, to how hard he worked to support his family and how much he loved his children. We are shown what I believe was an exciting intellectual period of ferment in this country, especially when compared with today's climate were "Crossfire" and "Hardball" pass as intellectual debate. Chambers is portrayed as one who was interested in the communist system but quickly discerned its true colors and remained a patriot. In my opinion, the debate as to Hiss' guilt has been determined, and Chambers was on the right side of history.

Kurzbeschreibung Whittaker Chambers is the first biography of this complex and enigmatic figure. Drawing on dozens of interviews and on materials from forty archives in the United States and abroad--including still-classified KGB dossiers--Tanenhaus traces the remarkable journey that led Chambers from a sleepy Long Island village to center stage in America's greatest political trial and then, in his last years, to a unique role as the godfather of post-war conservatism. This biography is rich in startling new information about Chambers's days as New York's "hottest literary Bolshevik"; his years as a Communist agent and then defector, hunted by the KGB; his conversion to Quakerism; his secret sexual turmoil; his turbulent decade at Time magazine, where he rose from the obscurity of the book-review page to transform the magazine into an oracle of apocalyptic anti-Communism. But all this was a prelude to the memorable events that began in August 1948, when Chambers testified against Alger Hiss in the spy case that changed America. Whittaker Chambers goes far beyond all previous accounts of the Hiss case, re-creating its improbably twists and turns, and disentangling the motives that propelled a vivid cast of characters in unpredictable directions. A rare conjunction of exacting scholarship and narrative art, Whittaker Chambers is a vivid tapestry of 20th century history. From the Trade Paperback edition. de A coolly objective look at the most controversial figure in the postwar crusade against American Communists. Whittaker Chambers (1901-61) made headlines in 1948 with his sensational accusation that former State Department official Alger Hiss was not only a Communist, but a spy, charges Hiss denied until his death in 1996. This scrupulously evenhanded biography concludes that Chambers told the truth, even as it pitilessly delineates his tortured family background, anguished sexual confusion, and political ruthlessness, which might well prompt doubts about his trustworthiness. Chambers' life makes a perfect case study of the most morally fraught period in American history. com A coolly objective look at the most controversial figure in the postwar

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