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Archibald Cox: Conscience Of A Nation

Ken Gormley

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Ken Gormley : Archibald Cox: Conscience Of A Nation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Archibald Cox: Conscience Of A Nation:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Must ReadBy Jackie ThibaultPardon the cliché but if you have any interest in History/Government this is a MUST read. I read Gormley's second book on Clinton impeachment and was enthralled by it. If you lived through both Watergate "Monica" this is required reading. It's unusual when history can be presented as a exciting narrative. Both Gormley's efforts do that.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent bookBy Sara ErwinExcellent book. It was so pristine I found it hard to think someone else had owned it.14

of 14 people found the following review helpful. A Terrific Biography Of An Extraordinary Individual! By Barron Laycock

In a time curiously bereft of public heroes, the life and achievements of Professor Archibald Cox of Harvard University stands in bold relief as a reminder of what a man of singular dedication, an ethic of public service, and a lifetime of professional integrity can do to change the course of history. This wonderful biography by law professor Ken Gormley recounts the life and accomplishments of this extraordinary person, a man who stood face to face in opposition to one of the most popular and powerful Presidents of the 20th century and, to his undying credit, never blinked. It is a riveting tale of man whose allegiance was to the simple notion that our nation is one ruled by law and not by individual personality. It also tells the captivating story of man who spent a lifetime serving the American people, living by his principles, and passing them on so memorably as a law professor at Harvard University. Cox appears everywhere in the pantheon of modern American accomplishment during his more than sixty year career. He first clerked for the legendary Supreme Court Justice Learned Hand in the midst of the Depression before embarking on a course as a pioneer in public labor law, soon to be asked to serve the federal executive, first as a Special Assistant to the National Defense Mediation Board, and then with the Solicitor General's office. Finally, shortly after the end of the war, he accepted a teaching position with Harvard Law School, where he was destined to become a leading legal expert in labor law. It was in this capacity that he eventually became an advisor to John F. Kennedy, a Harvard graduate and the junior Senator from Massachusetts. When Kennedy won the Presidency in 1960, he appointed Cox the position of Solicitor General, giving Cox the opportunity to argue brilliantly before the Supreme Court as the Government's advocate for civil rights reform. He also worked behind the scenes as a mediator during Harvard's internal student troubles in the late 1960s, trying to mend the huge political, philosophical, and educational issues leading to such dynamic student unrest. Yet all of these accomplishments and lifetime enterprises pale in the face of his later involvement as the Justice Department's Special Prosecutor in that newly created post to independently investigate the troubling issues surrounding the Nixon administration's participation in a wide range of suspect activities. As such, he was a key figure in the unraveling of the Watergate scandal as well as the subsequent Congressional investigations and impeachment proceedings against Richard Nixon. Instructed to conform, heal to Nixon's dictates or else, to cease and desist from his pursuit of the White House tapes, Cox quite simply refused to be cowed. Of course, he was then fired in the infamous Saturday Night Massacre, in which both Attorney General and his assistant publically refused to fire Cox and themselves resigned from the Administration. Republican toady, Solicitor General Robert Bork had no such scruples or compunctions, and promptly fired Cox. It was this single event of firing Cox that awoke the Congress and the nation regarding Nixon's viability, and this subsequently changed the political equation that eventually led to Nixon's own resignation in August of 1974. This is an entertaining, absorbing, and quite literate book, one that takes a fond and pensive look at that most rare of human individuals, a man guided by his dedication to principles and the rule of law. It is also a wonderful up-close and personal look at life inside the confines of the well-furnished parlors of privilege Cox has habituated all his life, based on birth, wealth, and, of course, his extraordinary ability. It is a rare open and honest look at the realities of how America works, often on the quite undemocratic basis of where one happens to go to college and professional study, upon who one knows, and by how well one can rise to the expectations and rules of conduct prevailing in the power elite. This is a splendid book about a rare and admirable man, and one most people can learn from reading. I highly recommend it.

By October 1973 special prosecutor Archibald Cox was tracing the Watergate cover-up to the Oval Office. President Nixon demanded that he stop. In the Saturday Night Massacre two heads of the Justice Department quit before Nixon found a subordinate (Robert Bork) willing to fire Cox. Immediately public opinion swung against the president and turned Cox into a heroseemingly Washington's last honest man. Cox's life was distinguished well before that Saturday night. He had been a clerk for the legendary judge Learned Hand, a distinguished professor at Harvard Law School, and the Solicitor General, arguing many Supreme Court cases. He exemplified what we want lawyers to be. At its core Archibald Cox is the story of a Yankee who went to Washington but refused to leave his principles behind.

.com Although Archibald Cox is best remembered as the special prosecutor whom President Nixon fired in the infamous "Saturday Night Massacre" for his investigation into Watergate, Ken Gormley's biography reveals the full extent of Cox's distinguished career as a public servant. Starting out as a clerk for Learned Hand, Cox went on to become a professor at Harvard Law School and an advisor to then-senator John F. Kennedy. When Kennedy became president, he appointed Cox to the position of solicitor general, where he argued before the Supreme Court in some of the vital civil rights cases of the era. And then, of course, there was the Watergate investigation; Gormley recounts in fascinating detail the wrangling between the Justice Department and the Oval Office over Nixon's tapes, drawing upon unpublished documents and interviews with key participants. In an era when special prosecutors have become common fixtures in controversial news stories, Gormley's portrait reveals how one man carried out the responsibilities of that office with such integrity and class as to rally a nation behind him. From Kirkus sThe jurist who gave Richard Nixon fits receives his due in a satisfying biography. Gormley (Law/Duquesne Univ.) approaches Cox as an exponent of a particularly tough, independent-minded, Yankee kind of approach to the law. Born in 1912, Cox came of age in a

time when the legal profession was nearly universally respected and when whole lineages devoted themselves to the practice of law (Gormley notes that Cox's great-grandfather William Maxwell Evarts defended Andrew Johnson when impeachment proceedings were undertaken against him in 1868). After clerking for the eminent federal judge Learned Hand, Cox became a government labor lawyer, then a Harvard professor, and then entered politics somewhat reluctantly as a speechwriter for presidential candidate John Kennedy. Despite his solid rsum, Cox was seemingly unprepared for the scrutiny that would attach to his work as the government's special prosecutor in the Watergate investigation of 1973. Gormley examines Nixon's charge that Cox was a politically motivated hit man who, with his staff, ``bored like termites through the whole executive branch," noting that Cox was in fact something of a legal conservative who criticized such rulings as Roe v. Wade and who found the whole business of turning up evidence against a sitting president personally distasteful. Gormley gives a careful account of the events leading up to Cox's dismissal at Nixon's orders; the man who fired him was a federal judge named Robert Bork, whose role as hatchet man would come back to haunt him more than a decade later as a nominee for the Supreme Court. Students of the Watergate years will find a few other gems in Gormley's pages, including an admission from Nixon's chief of staff Alexander Haig that the president ``could well be guilty." Otherwise, this well-written biography will be of most interest to students of law in the public interest. (bw photos, not seen) -- Copyright 1997, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved. In a year when the capital reeks with argument about investigating or prosecuting the President, Ken Gormley's Archibald Cox: Consicence of a Nation is a priceless set of compass bearings of how this course was once navigated.... Gormley's years of research in interviews and public and private papers have produced a gripping account of Cox's five-month tenure as head of the Watergate Special Prosecution Force and of why his work led Nixon to the blunder from which he would never recover. -- The New York Times Book , Adam Clymer