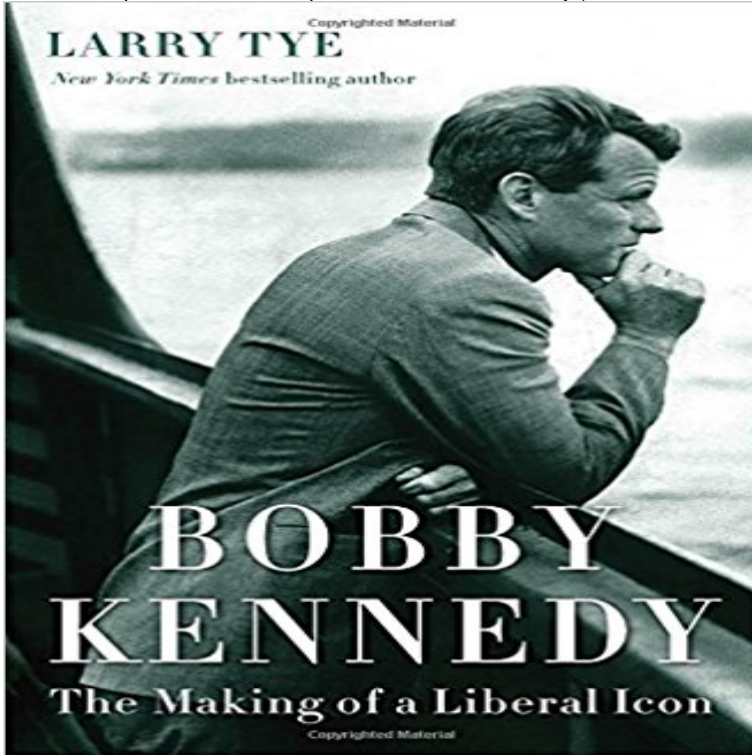


# Bobby Kennedy: The Making of a Liberal Icon



From the New York Times bestselling author of *Satchel* comes an in-depth, vibrant, and measured biography about the most complex and controversial member of the Kennedy family. 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 To capture the full arc of his subject's life, Tye draws on unpublished memoirs, unreleased government files, and fifty-eight boxes of papers that had been under lock and key for the past forty years.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 Siegenthaler—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* —

“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 “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

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