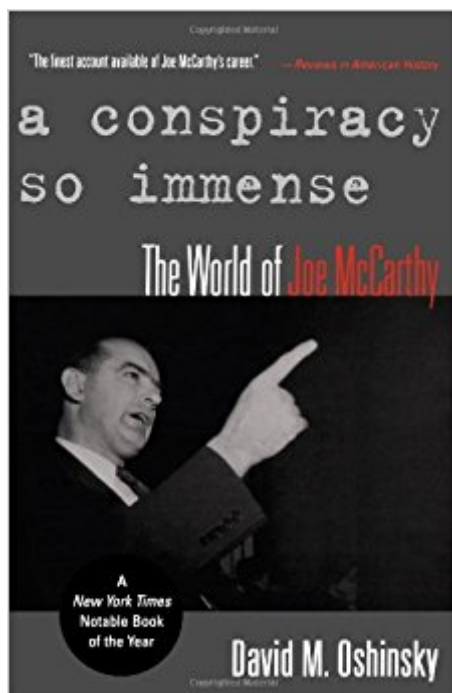


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# A Conspiracy So Immense: The World Of Joe McCarthy



## Synopsis

Acclaimed historian David Oshinsky's chronicling of the life of Senator Joe McCarthy has been called both "nuanced" and "masterful." In this new paperback edition Oshinsky presents us with a work heralded as the finest account available of Joe McCarthy's colorful career. With a storyteller's eye for the dramatic and presentation of fact, and insightful interpretation of human complexity, Oshinsky uncovers the layers of myth to show the true McCarthy. His book reveals the senator from his humble beginnings as a hardworking Irish farmer's son in Wisconsin to his glory days as the architect of America's Cold War crusade against domestic subversion; a man whose advice if heeded, some believe, might have halted the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia and beyond. *A Conspiracy So Immense* reveals the internal and external forces that launched McCarthy on this political career, carried him to national prominence, and finally triggered his decline and fall. More than the life of an intensely- even pathologically- ambitious man however, this book is a fascinating portrait of America in the grip of Cold War fear, anger, suspicion, and betrayal. Complete with a new Foreword, *A Conspiracy So Immense* will continue to keep in the spotlight this historical figure- a man who worked so hard to prosecute "criminals" whose ideals work against that of his- for America.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A staggeringly successful and rare new book of history...It is hard to tell in the space of this column why *A Conspiracy So Immense* impressed me so much. Of course, it has something to do with the

excellent writing, which may set a standard for crisp, witty historical prose...It has something to do with the extraordinary thoroughness of Oshinsky's research. His footnotes are historical gold mines. [Above all] Oshinsky shows that in that evil time, even the purest of motives were soiled. He shows us what man is. That is what makes great history, which is what *A Conspiracy So Immense* is."--Ben Stein, Los Angeles Herald-Examiner"[Oshinsky is] a great storyteller; he has done some terrific research, and best of all, he knows how to handle the drama of the era without getting too preachy."--The New York Times Book Review"Oshinsky's elegant and comprehensive biography can now lay its own claim to being the finest account available of Joe McCarthy's career."--Review in American History"The objectivity and scholarship of *A Conspiracy so Immense* should make it a standard treatment a vivid account of the Senator's progress from demagogue to grand inquisitor."--The New Leader"Professor David Oshinsky's *A Conspiracy So Immense* is the finest book on the period I have read."--Patrick J. Buchanan

David Oshinsky is George Littlefield Professor of American History at the University of Texas. His previous books include *Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow*, which won the Robert Kennedy prize for its contribution to human rights, and *Polio: An American Story* (Oxford University Press).

A detailed, scholarly, page-turning era examination that is very relevant to now given the role the late Roy Cohn played in coaching Joe McCarthy, and then the young Donald Trump, on how to keep your opponents off balance

One of the most fascinating, dense, detailed, and fair-minded accounts of the life and political career of America's greatest demagogue ever written. I ordered this book after a friend lent me another book by Oshinsky (on Polio) which was also riveting. If political turmoil of the '50s is a topic that intrigues you as it does me, you'll find this very rewarding reading. I would have given it five stars except for the terrible typography. The book appears to have been badly photo-copied, perhaps from the original hardcover edition. The wavy, indistinct type in this book is a genuine deal-breaker -- it actually distracts your attention from the amazing story of McCarthy and his cronies. I am appalled that the publisher, Oxford University Press, would accord a book of this quality such shoddy production. Shame on you.

Oshinsky presents a rather detailed look at Tail-gunning Joe. It is worth reading the detail.

Good reading. Not just sensationalist. Dead people are easy to vilify, but this book is an attempt to be honest in telling McCarthy's story

This book presents a more favorable picture of McCarthy than I might have expected from some of the reviews. I found it well balanced and even though it was the third or fourth book I have read that dealt with McCarthy, I learned new things about the era in which his Senate career took place and the politics of the time, as well as about the man himself.

Great insight into the life and career of this troubled, fearful, alcoholic.

I found this book hard to put down. It was well-written and brought across a real sense of McCarthy and his times. The author was as neutral as could be expected when dealing with the facts of McCarthy's actions. McCarthy's actions spoke for themselves, he was an arrogant man who thought he couldn't be stopped. He kept claiming that his responsibility was not to prove innocent or guilt, but to accuse. He had an end justifies the means attitude. The End was publicity for Joe McCarthy, and the means was accusing anyone and everyone of being a communist, even if he had to make up lies. What amazes me about this era was the idea that the Russians were so stupid they couldn't build the A-bomb without stealing our secrets, yet they were smart enough to infiltrate our government and take it over if we weren't diligent in rooting them out even at the expense of crushing innocent reputations. There were a couple of problems with the book, mostly the author's intrusion. A few times, maybe three or four, he bragged how the information he had just cited had not been cited in any other biography of McCarthy. I felt this was unnecessary and bogged down the narrative. All biographers have to pick and choose. There never is room for everything. Also, several of the footnotes didn't make sense to me. I couldn't quite understand what he was getting at. Also, a couple of times he had minor facts that didn't seem right. But, overall, I would definitely recommend the book.

Joe McCarthy is one of the most dangerous politicians to have ever surfaced in modern American politics. In my opinion, the roots to our decision to engage in the Korean War and Vietnam War can be traced back to McCarthy's demagoguery over Democrats being "soft on Communism" and "losing China". Democrats spent decades running from these labels. Today, clever politicians are pummeling their enemies with this same diatribe, shifting it to "soft on terrorism." We should be

seeking strong leaders, who are pragmatic and make decisions based on facts and analysis. But due to the success of McCarthy's attacks, foreign policy decision making still seems to be based on proving America is run by tough guys who are determined to show the world we enjoy a good fight. McCarthyism cost America a great deal in the past and is toxic to our future. We did not seem to learn anything from McCarthy's downfall. I see shadows of McCarthyism every time a politician explains the mess in Middle East.

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