



# The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country

*Laton McCartney*

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Mix hundreds of millions of dollars in petroleum reserves; rapacious oil barons and crooked politicians; under-the-table payoffs; murder, suicide, and blackmail; White House cronyism; and the excesses of the Jazz Age. The result: the granddaddy of all American political scandals, Teapot Dome.

In *The Teapot Dome Scandal*, acclaimed author Laton McCartney tells the amazing, complex, and at times ribald story of how Big Oil handpicked Warren G. Harding, an obscure Ohio senator, to serve as our twenty-third president. Harding and his so-called “oil cabinet” made it possible for the oilmen to secure vast oil reserves that had been set aside for use by the U.S. Navy. In exchange, the oilmen paid off senior government officials, bribed newspaper publishers, and covered the GOP campaign debt.

When news of the scandal finally emerged, the consequences were disastrous for the nation and for the principles in the plot to bilk the taxpayers: Harding’s administration was hamstrung; Americans’ confidence in their government plummeted; Secretary of the Interior Albert Fall was indicted, convicted, and incarcerated; and others implicated in the affair suffered similarly dire fates. Stonewalling by members of Harding’s circle kept a lid on the story—“witnesses developed ‘faulty’ memories or fled the country, and important documents went missing”—but contemporary records newly made available to McCartney reveal a shocking, revelatory picture of just how far-reaching the affair was, how high the stakes, and how powerful the conspirators.

In giving us a gimlet-eyed but endlessly entertaining portrait of the men and women who made a tempest of Teapot Dome, Laton McCartney again displays his gift for faithfully rendering history with the narrative touch of an accomplished novelist.

## **The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country Details**

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# From Reader Review The Teapot Dome Scandal: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country for online ebook

## Loring Wirbel says

This came close to a five-star rating, as McCartney assembled a wealth of direct and peripheral information on the various scandals of the Harding administration, and wove them into an aw-shucks good-ol'-boy tale of blatant corruption that challenges even the worst days of Watergate and Iran-contra. What makes the book simultaneously sinister and hilarious is McCartney's matter-of-fact, almost droll way of relating unbelievable details of an oil scandal that involved not just huge payoffs, but little murders at several turns. And, of course, McCartney points out that the saddest aspect of Teapot Dome was that, by the later years of the Calvin Coolidge administration, in those pre-crash days when everyone just wanted to make money and have a good time, the biggest barrier to learning the truth about Teapot Dome was not a recalcitrant Congress. It was a public that didn't care at all, even as the dead bodies piled up.

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## HBalikov says

Plenty to understand and relate to what has been going on in recent years. McCartney retells the story well with new material not in other versions.

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## Mara says

Reading the Presidents: Warren Harding (scandalous)

**Another Update** as of January 30, 2015 (Teapot Dome—the scandal that keeps on giving\*) *Government sells Teapot Dome — on the level, this time.*

**Update** Giving this a well-deserved bump in honor of the recent release of the *love letters between Harding and his mistress!*

For a nice sampling of the "sexy pen pal" action, check out *The Letters That Warren G. Harding's Family Didn't Want You to See*

### Original Review:

In an era that has featured a crack-smoking mayor, a Senator cruising for sex in an airport bathroom, and congressmen attempting to hide their infidelities behind ridiculous aliases and/or claims of "hiking the Appalachian Trail," it's hard to imagine that one could be shocked by the sheer hubris underlying a political scandal from nearly a century ago. And yet, here I stand, jaw still slightly agape, after finishing Laton McCartney's account of The Teapot Dome Scandal.

Elements of the story are all too familiar for a modern day reader. Big oil men in the White House, "no bid contracts," a presidential candidate who stumbles over his words (in Harding's case, often mixing up

Nebraska and Alaska), and opponents questioning the genealogy of the big man in the White House.

There are far too many pieces for me to recount them all. As McCartney points out, it's a bit like following a round of three card monte. However, the bit with which McCartney opens has many of the pieces that make the entire story so sinfully fun to follow: greed, philandering, betrayal, blackmail, murder and a trial that would have Court TV's ratings through the roof.

Big oilman, Jake Hamon (pronounced like the Purim villain), had a good thing going. Having ditched the wife and kids, he was traveling around the country bribing politicians, gambling, and prospecting for contracts with his mistress/business partner Clara. To make checking into hotels and such easier, Jake had his nephew marry and ditch Clara so they'd have the same last name.

Jake paid off a political boss to get Harding into the White House with the agreement that Harding would make Jake Secretary of the Interior, and, thus, put him in charge of a pretty piece of Naval Reserve oil property in Wyoming known as Teapot Dome. Lucky for Jake, Harding was part of *the Ohio Gang*, which was basically an entourage of gamblers and crooks, so Jake pretty much felt right at home.

Fast-forward to Harding's being elected and getting ready to make good on his deal. The bump in the road was Harding's wife, AKA "*the Duchess*" (above), who must have been in a bad mood because she wouldn't even let poor Warren visit his mistress (Nan Britton) and love child (below) on their way to D.C.

Even though she really should have been used to this kind of behavior as Warren was apt to "chase anything in a skirt," the Duchess was cousins(?) with Jake Hamon's *actual* wife and insisted that if Jake were to come to D.C., he'd have to bring her along rather than Clara (I know, it seems outrageous to me too).

Off in some hotel with Clara, Jake decides to suck it up (money's more important than broads, obviously) and tells Clara that they'll have to part ways. Whether *palimony* was a term in use back then is anyone's guess, but I guess he tried to be a good guy about it and offer her a few bucks for her travel back to nowhere.

Clara *seemed* to be taking it well when Jake walked in on her "packing." But, failing to realize the double entendre, Jake wasn't aware that little ol' Clara Hamon had gone out and purchased a 25-caliber Colt that afternoon, until, that is, she shot him.

The story gets ever more complicated from there with plenty of new, equally corrupt characters stepping in, and I'll leave you with a couple of paper clippings to give you a taste. However, I highly recommend you read (or listen, as I did) to the story yourself. It's equal parts appalling, humorous and ridiculous and chock full of "***convenient bullets in the head*** ." And, well, at the very least, I take some solace in the thought that it's not just something in the water these days that has made our political news cycle so crazy.

\* Citation: my dad

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### **Jennifer Heise says**

Almost everything I learned about 20th-century history until I was 20, I learned from Lillian Rogers Parks and J.B. West, so though I was fascinated by the stories of Teapot Dome scandal and the poker-playing, cigar smoking cabinet-cabal that was said to have run the Harding White House around, not through, Warren Gamaliel Harding.

What I found out from McCartney was that it was worse than I imagined. Allegedly, oilman Jake Hamon set out to buy the right candidate for President of the US so that he would be named secretary of the Interior. Thus he and several oil magnate friends could get leases for the Naval Oil Reserves (at Teapot Dome and in California)-- those friends were Edward L. Doheny and Harry Sinclair. They hooked up with Harry Daugherty, Ohio politico, who had decided to make his candidate, Harding, the Republican nominee, and would pair up with anyone to achieve it.

With the oil money, Daugherty's political machinations, and a certain amount of pushing from Mrs. Florence Harding, he succeeded. Unfortunately, Harding, at Mrs. Harding's insistence, told Hamon he had to dump his mistress and go back to his wife to get the job of secretary. Given the news, Hamon's mistress appears to have shot him (though at first Hamon said he did it himself). So rancher Albert Fall ended up with the job. Daugherty and his Ohio Gang ran the Attorney General's office allegedly like a protection racket; Sinclair and Doheny got their oil leases and Harding bumbled on until his death in his third year in office.

And that's when things got complicated.

A lot of this book is devoted to the set-up I just covered; the rest is the unravelling, both of Fall and of the various conspiracies, including a really crooked oil deal that seems to be only relevant because the Liberty bonds involved provided a chain of evidence from the oil magnates to fall.

Drunken parties, cigar smoke, political corruption, a veritable Follies of mistresses or alleged mistresses, a huge congressional investigation... this book has it all. The scandals of the last 30 years of the presidential politics are pre-writ here.

The main characters of this account are Albert Fall and Thomas Walsh, the Senator who chaired the investigations of the oil leases (after other oilmen raised a stink about the no-bid contracts). Ed Doheny and Harry Sinclair are vividly depicted, as is Daugherty and his roommate Jess Smith (who our author treats as a sort of nebbishy sidekick though others have claimed worse). Harding is a vivid cameo, as is RNC chairman Hayes.

Is this a completely accurate account? Oh, I'd have to read historian reviews to know that. Is it interesting and covers a great deal of ground, letting us know where there is disagreement on the stories? Yes.

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### **Jeffrey Keeten says**

**"Warren Harding seemingly exemplified the Middle American values held near and dear. It is not**

**simply a coincidence that seven U.S. presidents before Harding had hailed from Ohio. He was also strikingly handsome, usually impeccably tailored, had a vibrant speaking voice that reached the rear seats of the biggest auditoriums, and was as amiable as a Labrador retriever. But Harding had a long history of pursuing every comely female who came his way. And unlike some of similarly inclined successors in the White House, Harding didn't view these liaisons simply as "slam, bam, thank you, ma'am" affairs. Harding would assiduously court each of his mistresses, write them gushing love letters, leaving a paper trail, and juggle multiple affairs concurrently."**

### **Warren G. Harding**

Warren G. Harding was content to be a senator from Ohio, chasing women, drinking too much, and playing poker into the wee hours of the morning, but a man by the name of Harry Micajah Daugherty decided that Harding would make the perfect Republican president. He fit the profile perfectly. He looked presidential, and he was weak and easily controlled. If this sounds similar to a recent Republican president that is because the Daugherty play book very likely was handed down to Karl Rove.

### **Vintage Teapot Dome Postcard**

The idea for exploiting the Navy oil reserves in Wyoming called the Teapot Dome Reserve originated with an Oklahoma oilman by the name of Jake Hamon. He borrowed a million dollars against assets and paid for Harding's election campaign including all the numerous bribes that has to grease the wheel of any successful presidential campaign. All he wanted was a cabinet position the department of the interior. Unfortunately for Hamon fate threw a monkey wrench into his plans. Ten years earlier he'd left his wife for a nineteen year old shop girl named Clara. He'd paid his nephew \$10,000 to marry Clara so that he could check into hotels with her without questions being asked. The problem was that his estranged wife was related to Florence Harding, wife of the soon to be inaugurated president. She insisted that for Hamon to hold a cabinet position he must reunite with his wife and leave that floozy in Oklahoma.

I had a good laugh over this.

Florence was well aware of her own husband's philandering ways. His long-term twenty-three year old mistress, Nan Britton, and her baby daughter Elizabeth Ann whom Harding had fathered was one of the worst kept secrets in politics. An angry husband, the first of many, showed up at his campaign headquarters demanding compensation for Warren's affair with his wife the first day Harding received the nomination. Hamon's slush fund of money came in handy.

Well when Clara found out that Hamon was jilting her to go to Washington she shot him. Hamon died, but the idea of Teapot Dome did not die with him. Senator Albert Fall from New Mexico had money concerns, in fact he was on the verge of bankruptcy, which was especially galling after a life of public service. When he was tapped for the Interior position it wasn't so much an issue of whether he would support the Hamon idea, but more about how much money he could gain from helping to swing the deal. Control of Teapot Dome still rested with the Navy and as it turned out after some persuasion Secretary of the Navy Edwin C. Denby transferred control of the reserves over to the Interior. Fall leased the reserves to Harry F. Sinclair of Mammoth Oil. It wasn't illegal, maybe immoral, for Fall to give those no bid leases over to Sinclair, but the accompanying bribes were decidedly against the law. Harding, as expected, went along with the scheme. His part of the deal was the sale of his newspaper for five times what it was worth.

## **Senator Thomas J. Walsh**

Fall's expanded lifestyle tipped investigators and Senator Thomas J. Walsh from Montana, a Democrat, was tapped to investigate. Fall was in the pool with sharks and as one example of how rich people become really, really rich let me relate a bit of testimony from A. E. Humphreys.

*Humphreys related the details of the transaction nearly three years early at the Vanderbilt Hotel in New York. Humphreys had sold 33,333,333 barrels of oil to Continental. At the meeting were Continental's four owner-partners, Harry M. Blackmer, chairman of the board of Midwest Refining Company; James O'Neil, president of Prairie Oil and Gas Company; Colonel Robert W. Stewart, chairman of Standard Oil of Indiana; and Harry Sinclair. These men purchased Humphreys's oil at \$1.50 a barrel, then promptly resold it to their own oil companies at \$1.75 per barrel, creating a one-day profit of just over \$8 million. A little more than \$3 million of this sum had been converted into Liberty bonds and divided among the four Continental partners: Sinclair, Blackmer, O'Neil and Stewart.*

## **Harry F. Sinclair who started out a soda jerk in his father's store and ended up a rich oilman jerk.**

So in other words four of the top leading oilmen in the United States had used a dummy company to defraud their own shareholders out of millions of dollars. Any questions about why we need regulations in this country?

Let the lying begin.

Several witnesses come down with **Harding of the arteries** referring to the suspicious suicides and deaths including Warren G. Harding who suddenly died at age 57 from a stroke on vacation in San Francisco. Of course that might have just been one too many dips in the pool with a nubile female. There was serious speculation that he may have been murdered by his wife or by a member of the Teapot Dome investigation. His wife spent a week burning what can only be speculated were compromising papers before she would allow the new president Calvin Coolidge to take up residence in the White House. Other witnesses take extended vacations in Europe and go on safari in Africa. It doesn't take Walsh long to realize that he is onto something now it was only a matter of pulling the right threads.

## **Secretary of Interior Albert Fall, the perfect fall guy.**

The hapless, unhealthy Albert Fall turns out to be...well...the fall guy. He becomes the first presidential cabinet member to go to jail for his actions while in office. Other members of the scandal receive short sentences and slaps on the wrist. Laton McCartney lays out all the evidence, gives us background on all the characters, and paints a picture of a corruption that starts with a premeditated presidential election of an Ohio senator that was not only compromised, but willingly complicit in whatever dirty dealings his supporters were intent on perpetrating. I'll end with a blurb from Jon Meacham, author of *Franklin and Winston*.

*"A terrific tale about a scandal that resonates nearly a century on, at a time when many people are still wondering about the connections between Big Oil and politicians at the highest levels."*

If you wish to see more of my most recent book and movie reviews, visit <http://www.jeffreykeeten.com>  
I also have a Facebook blogger page at: <https://www.facebook.com/JeffreyKeeten>

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## **Clif Hostetler says**

Rich man's justice, secret campaign contributions, disregard for conservation of natural resources, and Republican Party arrogance, it seemed like *deja vu* all over again. But this book is not about today's news, it's about the 1920s. Some say it's the biggest scandal in U.S. history, but others say that honor now belongs to the Watergate scandal, which is also owned by a Republican administration.

The actual bribery incident that was the heart of the Teapot Dome scandal occurred in 1922-1923 during the administration of President Warren G. Harding. But coverup efforts, investigations and prosecutions stretched out over the rest of the decade of the 1920s. Secretary of the Interior Albert B. Fall leased Navy petroleum reserves in Wyoming to private oil companies at low rates without competitive bidding. In 1922 and 1923, the leases became the subject of a sensational investigation by Senator Thomas J. Walsh. Fall was later convicted of accepting bribes from the oil companies. Interestingly, the rich men who paid the bribe money to Secretary Fall were also tried but thanks to their high priced lawyers they were acquitted.

If the reader of this book really wants to understand the story explained by this book it will be necessary to draw a chart with lines connecting the various names and actions. We're talking about a fairly complicated series of actions and lots of things to keep track of. The timing of various actions and investigative discoveries are also factors to keep track of. Thus some readers may find this book a bit tedious to follow. But I have a special interest in this era because my father was working in southern California at the time, and he was planning to attend a public appearance of President Harding in August 1923. But Harding died in San Francisco prior to his scheduled travel to southern California. That's the closest anybody in my family ever came to seeing a U.S. president in person.

The following review is from PageADay's 2012 Calendar:

### **LIVING HISTORY**

The rollicking tale of a fun-loving president put in place by big-oil cronies and the enormous scandal that erupted when all was finally revealed. Warren G. Harding proved that presidential dustups are evergreen, and Laton McCartney's prose is ebullient. This is better-than-fiction history: "titillating, tantalizing" (The Baltimore Sun), it "reads like a novel" (Houston Chronicle).

***THE TEAPOT DOME SCANDAL: HOW BIG OIL BOUGHT THE HARDING WHITE HOUSE AND TRIED TO STEAL THE COUNTRY***, by Laton McCartney (Random House, 2009)

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## **Alisha Bennett says**

Definitely worth a read! I enjoyed this book; while desperately wanting to punch many of the people in it!

First off, McCartney does an excellent job of guiding the reader through the murky political waters and smoky back-room deals that abound in this book. The ins and outs of who is who and how they are connected can get a bit complicated and he keeps this in mind while never seeming to talk down to the reader.

The con-man, big \$\$ and crooked politician are all as old as the country itself so it was interesting to see that greed, corruption and the destruction of our resources are nothing new. A quick read; and there are quite a few surprising characters that appear in various ways (Teddy Roosevelt Jr for one!).

It's a little hard to review the book without giving it away; but if you like a little intrigue, definitely pick this up.

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### **Richard Derus says**

Rating: 4.5\* of five

\*\*\*NOTE 7/11/18 I'm amazed I wrote this review in 2012. Coulda been written today.

**The Publisher Says:** Big Oil bought the election of 1920 for Sen. Warren G. Harding of Ohio, because he was amenable to giving away huge amounts of money to the oil companies, including using American power in Mexico to undo the Mexican nationalization of the oil companies' assets there. Part of the payoff to the oil interests was assigning leases worth about \$100 million (in 1920 dollars...well north of a billion now) in the US Navy's strategic petroleum reserve in several locations.

Including Teapot Dome, Wyoming.

It all unraveled, the leases were voided, and thanks to a crusading Montana populist Sen. Tom Walsh, several really rich and really corrupt men spent some token time in jail.

Despite his proven knowledge of the transactions, Harding's vice-president was re-elected in 1924 (Harding died in 1923, some suspect at Mrs. Harding's hand, so he would never have to testify before the Walsh Committee).

Oh for the good old days.

**My Review:** This book was published in 2008, an election year. I do not think this was an accident. The GOP, a sink of depravity and greed since the Taft Administration, did not need any help losing that election...the fact that the sitting vice-president didn't run as the candidate tells you all you need to know there, the GOP knew what was coming and wanted someone else to take the blame for it...but this book, about a conspiracy of evil, greedy GOP pols, their money-men, and the full intent to defraud We-the-People for private wealth, was still well-timed.

Lest any stupid damnfool conservative start mooing about bias, I rush to report that the author does not say the words I've said. The author reports the facts as history has them. The Committee reports, the papers of all parties concerned, all extant documentary evidence, was used in a careful reconstruction of the actual events that led to the Teapot Dome Scandal, as we've come to call it.

The fact that the documentary evidence makes the conservatives look like evil, greedy bastard mo-fos is just a bonus. Embrace the demon within, GOP/Tea Party supporters! Align yourselves with those who think nothing of splashing out millions to buy the votes and influence the course of the river of money that flows from any government into their own pockets, with the minimum of trickle-down into the Public Good.

Do it openly, and in full knowledge of what kind of rotten sleazebags you're supporting...they've never been any different. Read this book and see why.

### **Tony says**

McCartney, Laton. THE TEAPOT DOME SCANDAL: How Big Oil Bought the Harding White House and Tried to Steal the Country. (2008). \*\*\*\*. I remember zipping through this period in American History both in high school and college. The “Teapot Dome” scandal was mentioned, but not in much detail. What we probably learned was equivalent to the extended title of this book. Now we can learn about all the players and most of their sneaky moves during Harding’s run for president and during his short term in office. His successor, Coolidge, fully justified his nickname of “Silent Cal” while the wrongdoers were being prosecuted. The Teapot Dome was a reserved area of Wyoming that contained significant quantities of oil. It was reserved for the Department of the Navy to tap into in the event of war. The oil barons knew of its potential worth, but needed someone in the White House to release it from its protected status, i.e., to open the area up to commercial drilling and exploitation. To do this, various interests sponsored the nomination of Harding from Ohio in the 1920 elections. Harding agreed that if he won, a person sympathetic to big oil’s interests would be appointed to the Department of the Interior and “grease the skids” to the opening of the preserve. Harding had a snowball’s chance in Hell to win the election, but money was poured on and delegates bought and deals made so that he was elected. Albert Fall, a friend of big oil, was appointed to the Interior and in exchange for money – lots of it – managed to wrest control of the area from the Navy and provide the oil industry with the opportunity of drilling there. Hundreds of millions of dollars were at stake, and the heads of the various oil cartels in the U.S. made sure that many of those dollars were spread around to appropriate government employees. The key oil executive in all of this was Sinclair, although other representatives from the various Standard Oil corporations were also involved. When news of what was going on started to leak out, a special committee of Congress, headed by Senator Thomas J. Walsh, began their investigations. This investigation exposed all the principal players in all of their arrogance. They all believed that they were above the law and that their actions were simply “business.” This book presents an excellent review of the case that includes the use of newly available material. The writing is well done and concise. Recommended.

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### **Dennis says**

The Harding presidency was conceived in corruption, and this is a fine account of the largeness and complexity of that corruption. Harding was brought out of near obscurity for the purpose winning the presidency and immediately appointing a Secretary of the Interior, Albert Fall, who resided deep in the pockets of Big Oil. Fall shifted control of large naval oil reserves to his department and all but gave them to his buddies. Other areas of the Harding administration were equally corrupt, i.e the Department of Justice. It was a massive effort of honest men to investigate the corruption, return the oil fields to government control and bring the perpetrators to justice.

McCartney does a fine job unravelling the complexities of the scandal and illuminating the men and women involved. The Teapot Dome scandal made America more cynical concerning the rich and powerful. Lost jobs, fines and short prison sentences were the results of hundreds of millions of dollars illegally flowing into the pockets of corrupt individuals. But, it was stopped. This is a good story.

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### **Gilda Felt says**

The more things change, the more things stay the same. Isn't that the truth, as this book so aptly demonstrates.

The book is ultimately interesting, but it took awhile to get to the meat of the issue, as there are many threads to follow, a veritable who's who of corrupt Oilmen of the Gilded Age. And a cautionary tale, since I often felt like I was reading about today's issues. And though Fall was convicted, the vast majority of the conspirators got off scott free.

The book often reads like a novel, especially since the footnotes are all collected as "notes," and aren't very comprehensive. Nevertheless, it's a fascinating look at a time very much like our own.

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### **Yoel says**

I had to stop reading this after reading about 30 pages. I was skeptical about some of the stuff he presents as facts, and when I checked them out, turns out some of the "facts" are hotly disputed.

For example: the author presents as FACT that Harding was the father of Nan Britton's child. Turns out this was Nan Britton's assertion and has never been proven; it is still disputed to this day.

In fact, turns out the entire affair with Nan Britton is alleged, but has never been proven.

Yet, you would never know these points are disputed by historians from reading this book.

That to me is very disappointing and was reason enough for me to stop reading and give this book a 1 rating.

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### **Steve says**

The *Hollywood Babylon* of political skullduggery. Murder (chapter 1!), several questionable (and convenient) suicides, sex, payoffs, dirty judges, dirty politicians, dirty oil, illegal booze, one poor dancing girl who gets hit in the head by a flying bottle (and who eventually dies) at a poker party the president is attending, destruction of evidence, witness intimidation, it's pretty much all here. I turned to this book after a scene from episode 8 of *Boardwalk Empire*, involving the nomination of Harding at the 1920 Republican convention. *Boardwalk Empire* is a wonderful series, but after reading this book, I'm thinking Teapot Dome deserves its own HBO miniseries. Watergate is for pussies. This is SLEAZE at epic levels, and it really is a story that Americans should all know. An absolutely riveting read from cover to cover.

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### **Kelley says**

Wow, it's been 90 years since the beginning of this scandal took shape, and after reading it I am sickened by the lack of integrity, greed, and complete indifference that took place. I don't even want to buy Sinclair gas after this book. Sadly this really was just a precursor to the scandal and shame of wall street and those companies that stole, lied, cheated and did whatever it took to make more money and take it from those who deserve it.

I am amazed that Coolidge was elected president in 1924. Good read, very enlightening. Good to know 90 years ago I wouldn't have liked the Republicans for the same reason I don't like them today.

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### **Patrick says**

Wow...great book. But this will make you very, very cynical.

All the stuff people accuse Presidents Clinton and Bush Jr. of are combined and documented in Harding's presidency. Flagrant womanizing, drunken parties, dumb guy with pretty face put into office by oil interests (I'm not saying Bush is pretty. This one is a combo of Bush and Clinton), political appointments to loyal money men and flunkies, misuse of power by those political appointees for profit, environmental attacks, encouragement of a foreign war over oil interests (in Mexico), jury tampering, murder of witnesses, biased media, bribes, bribes, bribes, money, money, money.

Fascinating and sad.

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