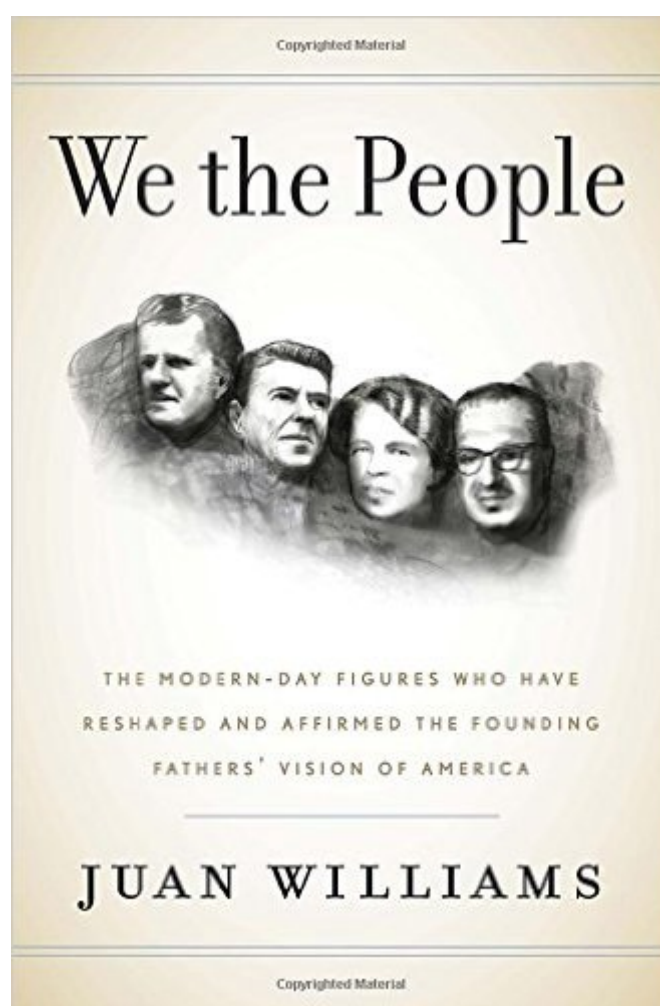


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We The People: The Modern-Day Figures Who Have Reshaped And Affirmed The Founding Fathers' Vision Of America



Synopsis

What would the Founding Fathers think about America today? Over 200 years ago the Founders broke away from the tyranny of the British Empire to build a nation based on the principles of freedom, equal rights, and opportunity for all men. But life in the United States today is vastly different from anything the original Founders could have imagined in the late 1700s. The notion of an African-American president of the United States, or a woman such as Condoleezza Rice or Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, would have been unimaginable to the men who wrote the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, or who ratified the Constitution or the Bill of Rights. In a fascinating work of history told through a series of in depth profiles, prize-winning journalist, bestselling author, and Fox political analyst Juan Williams takes readers into the life and work of a new generation of American Founders, who honor the original Founders' vision, even as they have quietly led revolutions in American politics, immigration, economics, sexual behavior, and reshaped the landscape of the nation. Among the modern-day pioneers Williams writes about in this compelling new book are the passionate conservative President Reagan; the determined fighters for equal rights, Thurgood Marshall and Martin Luther King, Jr.; the profound imprint of Rev. Billy Graham's evangelism on national politics; the focus on global human rights advocated by First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt; the leaders of the gay community who refused to back down during the Stonewall Riots and brought gay life into America's public square; the re-imagined role of women in contemporary life as shaped by Betty Friedan. Williams reveals how each of these modern-day founders has extended the Founding Fathers original vision and changed fundamental aspects of our country, from immigration, to the role of American labor in the economy, from modern police strategies, to the importance of religion in our political discourse. America in the 21st Century remains rooted in the Great American experiment in democracy that began in 1776. For all the changes our economy and our cultural and demographic make-up, there remains a straight line from the first Founders' original vision, to the principles and ideals of today's courageous modern day pioneers.

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Customer Reviews

In this collection of historical vignettes, Juan Williams seeks to connect the lives and legacies of a number of influential postwar Americans to the constitutional vision of the nation's Founders. His success in this endeavor is uneven. If the Sons of Liberty had been gay, would they have joined in throwing rocks and bottles at the police during the 1969 Stonewall riots? Possibly so. Certainly, gays today would be justified in regarding that confrontation as the violent birth of a struggle for freedom and individual rights, much like the battles at Lexington and Concord. But that seems about as far as the comparison can be pressed. The connection becomes even more subtle when Williams sets the founding of the United States against the social transformation stemming from the publication of Betty Friedan's "The Feminine Mystique." If his point is simply that the women's movement changed America, fundamentally altering the way most Americans experience their culture, no one could demur. Parsing the book's subtitle, it is arguably true that Friedan and her peers reshaped ... the Founding Fathers' vision of what America is. But so did the San Francisco earthquake. Things were never quite the same again. In the final analysis, that may be all the author is getting at. Williams' accounts, often partly in first person, of the accomplishments of such liberal icons as Thurgood Marshall, Rachel Carson, and Daniel Patrick Moynihan are enlightening and sometimes inspiring. He has tougher sledding coming to grips with pivotal figures of a conservative or libertarian bent.

Despite the main title, this book is about the main changes in America since World War II. Williams is a liberal commentator but his analysis is pretty even handed, giving both sides of every issue. You can get a lot of useful information from this book whether you are liberal or conservative. The main point is that a new group of innovators like the original Founding Fathers has created a New America. There is a chapter on each set of innovators. One of the main events that has changed America is the 1965 Immigration Act which opened up the country to nonstop third world

immigration. Its foundation was the application of the civil rights movement to immigration. The main proponent of this act was Senator Ted Kennedy. He helped get the act passed by promising that it would not result in an annual flood of millions of immigrants, immigration rates would remain stable, and the ethnic mix of America would not change. All of this turned out to be incorrect. Williams credits Supreme Court Justice Warren as being the main force in advancing civil rights for blacks with the Brown decision of 1954 which ended segregation in public schools. But this event was preceded by many integration decisions which gradually led up to Brown. One big one Williams fails to mention is Truman's 1948 executive order to integrate the armed services. This change was coming sooner or later and Warren gave it a big push. Williams says it started the modern civil rights era which led to the 1964 Civil Rights Act. One thing Williams does not mention is that the opponents of the act as written claimed it would lead to preferential treatment for blacks. The liberal establishment labeled this claim as ridiculous but it turned out to be true.

Did I enjoy Jaun's book? Yes. Did I agree with all his topics? No. Let me clarify. Juan Williams is a popular Liberal commentator on FoxNews. If you have watch him on the various programs he is on, you know he is there to express the Liberal view. When you read this book, and I recommend it, you need to know his bias. I heard him on one of the news programs saying he offered a far representation of modern people who have affected change in America like the Founding Fathers did over two hundred years ago. This would have been a five star review if he presented a balance of individuals on the political spectrum. For example, the women he chose came from the feminist movement pretty much ignoring the women who fought the feminist movement like Phyllis Shaffley who passed recently. He discusses the US welfare program since the Great Society, he praises Lyndon Johnson but fails to mention that his programs have destroyed poor families, especially poor Afro-Americans. He primarily discusses the wonders of such programs and neglects all the negatives. I admired his covering the contributions of Martin Luther King, Jr., but I got the impression that he thought Rev. Jesse Jackson might have affected more change. He mentions that at the murder of Dr. King and how Jackson ran to his side, smeared blood on his clothing, and used the opportunity to position himself as the successor of the fallen leader. He labeled Jackson as an opportunist and that his change was more political than the moral approach the Dr. King had taken. What bothered me the most is that he thought Jackson affected more than Dr. King. He failed to address other African-Americans who made major contributions. He did say that Jackson paved the way to the election of President Obama.

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